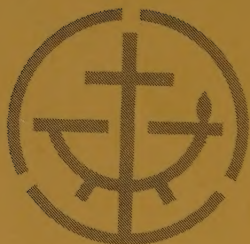


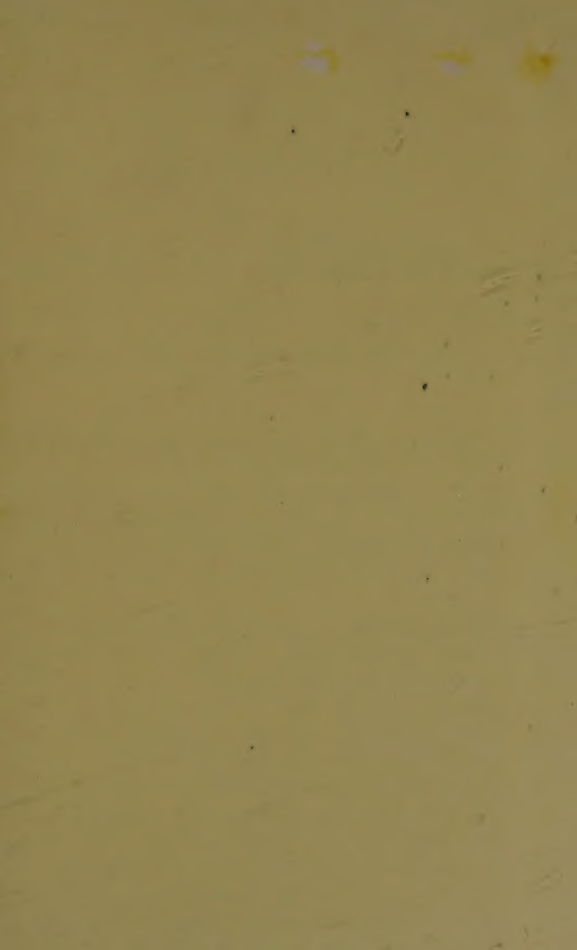
School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1398602



Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California



THE
WRITINGS
OF THE
DOCTRINAL PURITANS
AND
DIVINES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

DURING the last twenty years, the Committee of the RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY have sent forth many of the valuable writings of those devoted servants of Christ, who lived and wrote in the seventeenth century, and of others of a later date, who, being like-minded, have borne a similar testimony. These are THE DOCTRINAL PURITANS of our land.

Few persons are aware of the extent to which these publications have been prepared by the RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY, and that for a few shillings many of the most valuable writings of our divines who succeeded the Reformers may be obtained. Amidst the continued efforts now made to engage public attention to the productions of the press, the Committee of the RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY find it an imperative duty prominently to state what has been done, and to show that readers of every station may *at once* avail themselves of the result of these exertions, to a greater or less extent, as they please.

Although these invaluable treasures have now, for some years, been placed within the reach of all classes of the

community, public attention has not been directed to them as a whole, forming a collective body of sound Protestant, scriptural truth, suitable for libraries, whether for private use or public circulation, and for the many circumstances and states of life, which render the possession of such books and their presentation to others, valuable benefits. The advantages arising from improved methods and proceedings in mechanical preparation, and in other ways, also enable the Committee now to offer this series in volumes, on terms at which, a few years since, only the pamphlet of a few pages could be acquired.

Many of the Society's works—as LEIGHTON, BUNYAN, and CHILLINGWORTH—are now given in a more correct form than in the numerous reprints of late years. Others are abridged or condensed, so as to render them much more valuable for circulation, and desirable for perusal; these books being distinguished accordingly, while, as a whole, they will be found edited with much care and fidelity.

The Series of publications now in the course of issue contains some of the best works of The Doctrinal Puritans and Divines of the Seventeenth Century. They are arranged in pocket volumes, containing, on the average, three hundred and sixty pages each, in neat cloth boards, price 1s. 4d. each volume.

A volume is published every alternate month, or six volumes in the year.

The following were the six volumes for the first year, beginning with January, 1846.

VOL. I.

HOWE ON THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; AND, THE REDEEMER'S DOMINION OVER THE INVISIBLE WORLD.

VOL. II.

SELECT DEVOTIONAL WORKS OF BISHOP HALL.

VOL. III.

CHARNOCK'S DISCOURSES ON CHRIST CRUCIFIED ; AND, A
DISCOURSE PROVING WEAK GRACE VICTORIOUS.

VOL. IV.

BISHOP HOPKINS' PRACTICAL EXPOSITION ON THE LORD'S
PRAYER ; AND, ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO COVENANTS.

VOL. V.

THOMAS WATSON'S SAINT'S SPIRITUAL DELIGHT ; A DIVINE
CORDIAL ; AND, THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

VOL. VI.

BISHOP REYNOLDS' ISRAEL'S PRAYER IN TIME OF TROUBLE ;
AND, THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE BELIEVER.

ISSUE FOR 1847.

VOL. VII.

DR. JOHN OWEN ON INDWELLING SIN ; AND, ON THE
MORTIFICATION OF SIN IN BELIEVERS.

VOL. VIII.

FLAVEL ON THE DIVINE CONDUCT, OR THE MYSTERY OF
PROVIDENCE ; AND, A SAINT INDEED.

VOL. IX.

ARCHBISHOP USHER'S SERMONS.

VOL. X.

THOMAS GOODWIN ON CHRIST SET FORTH IN HIS DEATH,
RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, SITTING AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND,
AND INTERCESSION.

VOL. XI.

DR. STEPHEN CHARNOCK ON CHRIST'S DEATH, EXALTATION,
AND INTERCESSION ; AND, A DISCOURSE ON MOURNING
FOR OTHER MEN'S SINS.

VOL. XII.

NATHANAEL RANEW ON SOLITUDE IMPROVED BY DIVINE
MEDITATION.

It is proposed to issue the following six volumes in the year 1848.

VOL. XIII.

January 1.

THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST ESSENTIAL TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION: A TREATISE ON THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. BY JAMES ABBADIE, D.D., DEAN OF KILLALOE, IN IRELAND.

VOL. XIV.

March 1.

HEAVEN OPENED ; OR, A BRIEF AND PLAIN DISCOVERY OF THE RICHES OF GOD'S COVENANT OF GRACE. BY RICHARD ALLEINE.

VOL. XV.

May 1.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES. BY THOMAS BROOKS. TOGETHER WITH HEART'S EASE IN HEART TROUBLE ; OR, A SOVEREIGN REMEDY AGAINST ALL TROUBLE OF HEART.

VOL. XVI.

July 1.

SELECT SERMONS. BY THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D., BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

VOL. XVII.

September 1.

SPIRITUAL PERFECTION UNFOLDED AND ENFORCED. BY WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

VOL. XVIII.

November 1.

IMMANUEL ; OR, TRUE RELIGION A-LIVING PRINCIPLE IN THE MINDS OF MEN ; AND, A WELCOME TO AFFLICTION. BY SAMUEL SHAW, M.A.

DOCTRINAL PURITANS

BX
5133
B4

SELECT

SERMONS,

BY

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.,

BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

SELECT SERMONS.

BY THE
RIGHT REVEREND
WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.,
BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

LONDON :
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY ;
Instituted 1799.
SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD ;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

CONTENTS.

THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. Page

EXODUS III. 14.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM : and he
said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,
I AM hath sent me unto you 1

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE THE BEST GUARD AGAINST SIN.

PSALM XVI. 8.

I have set the Lord always before me : because he is
at my right hand I shall not be moved 22

THE UNITY OF CHRIST WITH GOD THE FATHER.

JOHN X. 30.

I and my Father are one 50

333221

THE MERITS OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

JOHN I. 29.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of
the world 76

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST'S CROSS.

GALATIANS VI. 14.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross
of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is
crucified unto me, and I unto the world . . . 101

CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN PRE-
PARATORY TO OURS.

JOHN XIV. 2, 3.

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were
not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a
place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for
you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself;
that where I am, there ye may be also . . . 122

THE DANGER OF UNBELIEF.

LUKE XII. 46.

And will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers 149

FAITH IN CHRIST, THE ONLY MEANS OF
OVERCOMING THE WORLD.

1 JOHN V. 5.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that
believeth that Jesus is the Son of God . . . 176

OF TAKING UPON US CHRIST'S YOKE.

MATTHEW XI. 29.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am
meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto
your souls 204

AN EXHORTATION TO THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTHEW XXII. 37.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind 228

THE GREAT HAPPINESS OF LOVING GOD.

ROMANS VIII. 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to
them that love God, to them who are called accord-
ing to his purpose 257

ALL THINGS TO BE DONE TO THE GLORY
OF GOD.

1 CORINTHIANS X. 31.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye
do, do all to the glory of God 277

OF SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS
ABOVE.

COLOSSIANS III. 2.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on
the earth 305

PERPETUAL REJOICING THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 4.

Rejoice in the Lord alway ; and again I say, Rejoice . 332

AGAINST RASH SWEARING.

MATTHEW V. 34.

But I say unto you, Swear not at all . . . 351

THE APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION IN THE NAME OF THE TRINITY.

2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 14.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of
God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with
you all 377

S E R M O N S.

THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

EXODUS III. 14.

AND GOD SAID UNTO MOSES, I AM THAT I AM: AND HE SAID, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, I AM HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU.

SEEING all the happiness that mankind is capable of, consisteth in the enjoyment of that supreme and all-glorious Being whom we call God; and seeing we can never enjoy him unless we first serve him, nor serve him unless we first know him; hence it necessarily follows, that as ever we desire to be truly happy, our first and great care must be to know God, not only so as to acknowledge him to be, but so as to have a due sense, and right and clear apprehensions of him, and of those infinite perfections that are concentrated in him: for it is only such a knowledge of God as this that will incline our affections to him, and put us upon constant and sincere endeavours so to serve him here, that we may enjoy him for ever. But this we can never attain to without consulting those Divine oracles wherein this Almighty Being hath been pleased to make known himself, and to discover his perfections to us. I shall therefore endeavour, at this time, to show what kind of thoughts and conceptions we ought to frame in our minds concerning the Most High God,

■

and what influence they will have upon our lives and actions.

But who is sufficient for these things? At least, who am I, a silly worm, that I should take upon me to speak of Him, by whom alone I speak? and being myself but a finite and sinful creature, should strive to unveil the nature of the infinite and most holy God? Alas! I cannot so much as begin to think of him, but immediately my thoughts are confounded, my heart is perplexed, my mind amazed, my head turns round, my whole soul seems to be unhinged and overwhelmed within me. His mercy exalts me, his justice depresses me, his wisdom astonishes me, his power affrights me, his glory dazzles mine eyes; and, "by reason of his highness," as Job speaks, "I could not endure," Job xxxi. 23. The least glimpse of him makes me abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes before him. But how then shall I dare to discourse of him, and endeavour to manifest and declare his greatness and glory unto others? Verily, if he himself, in his holy word, had not given me both leave and a command to do it, I should not have presumed to attempt it. But seeing he hath been pleased both to blame his people for not knowing him, and his ministers for not making him known to his people; and hath enjoined us so to display and discover his Divine perfections, that others may fear and love him; in obedience to his command, I shall endeavour to stammer out, as well as I can, what we are to believe and conceive of him, by whom alone we are able to believe and conceive of any thing else; humbly beseeching him so to assist and direct me in it, by the same Spirit whereby he wrote the holy Scriptures, that I may say nothing of him but what

is right and proper, agreeable to the same Scriptures, and becoming his majesty and honour.

In an humble confidence of whose assistance, I would now enter upon this divine subject. But where shall I begin to speak of him who had no beginning at all, and will have no end? And what words can I take upon myself whereby to express his glory, who infinitely surpasseth all expressions whatsoever? All expressions, did I say? yea, and conceptions too: for his nature is so pure, his goodness so great, his knowledge so transcendent, his power so boundless, his wisdom, justice, and mercy so mysterious, his glory so incomprehensible, and all his perfections so high, so infinitely high, that our highest conceptions of him are still infinitely below him. And, therefore, when he would make known himself to us in his holy Scriptures, he is pleased to condescend to our capacities, so as to fit his expressions to our weak apprehensions; not speaking of himself as he is in himself, for then we should not be able to apprehend what he meant; but as a nurse to a child, who utters not her mind in complete sentences, but lisps it out in broken language, fitted to the shallow capacity of its tender years; even so doth the great God speak to us in such language as we are best able to understand: sometimes making use of the names that we give to the several parts of our bodies, and the passions of our minds, to signify those infinite perfections that are in him, or the effects of them unto us. Thus he useth the word eye, to signify his omniscience, because the eye is that part of the body whereby we see; and the word hand, to express his power, because it is by that we act. Thus also he useth the words rejoicing, grieving, loving, hating,

repenting, and the like, to denote something in him which we cannot so well apprehend as by the dark resemblance which these passions in us have of it.

And seeing it is by names that we usually know both persons and things, and distinguish one from another; hence, God is pleased to give himself such names in holy writ, from whence we may gather what he would have us think of his nature, so as to distinguish him from all other things. That which he himself, in a more especial manner, calls his name, Isa. xlii. 8, is Jehovah, as we commonly pronounce it, which both the Septuagint in the Old Testament, and the apostles and evangelists in the New Testament, constantly interpret by Κύριος; respecting certainly not the modern, but the original use and etymology of the word, wherein it agrees exactly with it: for as Jehovah comes from יהוה, "to be," so doth Κύριος come from κύρω, "to be:" for that κύρω was anciently the same with εἰμι καὶ ὑπάρχω, is plain, both from Hesychius and several of the ancient Greek scholiasts. But because that word is commonly used to signify a lord or governor, therefore our English translation always renders it The LORD, in small capital letters; and wheresoever we read The LORD so written, it answers to the most proper and essential name of God, signifying essence or being itself. Which, therefore, must needs raise up our understanding to the highest and most abstracted notion of God that we can possibly reach; no thought being able to rise higher than to being itself.

Hence, therefore, it having pleased the most high God to reveal and represent himself to us under this name or title, he thereby suggests to us, that he would not have us apprehend him as any par-

ticular or limited being, but as a being in general, or the Being of all things, who gives being to, and, therefore, exerciseth authority over all things in the world.

And it may not be unworthy our observation, that in the first chapter of Genesis, before he had perfected his work and settled all things in their being, he is not so much as once called the Lord, but only God: but in the second chapter, when the creation was finished, he is often called **THE LORD**, in small capital letters. From whence it is easy to gather, that this glorious name of God is used chiefly in reference to the creatures to which he gives being and existence, and over which he, therefore, is most properly the Lord and Sovereign. Thus he himself seems to explain his own name, where he saith, "I am **THE LORD**," (Jehovah) "that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself," Isa. xlv. 24: intimating that he is therefore called Jehovah, because that he, and he alone, gives being and existence to all things in heaven and earth. And hence it is that he is so often called "the **LORD** of hosts:" neither, as I remember, is this great name ever used with any other genitive case after it. He is never called the Lord of any one thing, but only of hosts. He is, I confess, sometimes called the Lord of the whole earth, but in all such places it is not in the original יהוה, but ארץ; and, therefore, is, or at least ought to be, always written in small, not in capital letters, to distinguish it from Jehovah: for he is never called the **LORD** of any one or more particular things or parts of the creation, but only of the whole, the **LORD** of the universe; for so the word "sabaoth," or hosts, properly signifies. "Thus," saith Moses, "the heavens and the earth were

finished, and all the host of them," Gen. ii. 1 ; that is, of each of them. Where the word "host" is plainly used to signify everything that is in heaven or earth ; or, as we say, in the whole world, which in Hebrew is always expressed by those two words, "heaven" and "earth." So that the LORD of hosts, in the plural number, is the same in effect as if we should say, the Being of all beings, that gives essence and existence to everything that is.

Another thing much to be observed concerning this great name is, that as it never hath any other genitive case but "sabaoth" after it, so neither hath it ever, or very rarely, any adjective, except "one," joined with it, at least in the original. He is often called a great, a just, a merciful, an almighty God ; but never a great, a just, a merciful, an almighty Jehovah, but absolutely "the LORD." And the reason is, because all perfections are necessarily included in that very name itself. So that to add any thing to it would be a mere tautology, or rather a diminution from it, as limiting or confirming it to some one perfection, when that all are signified by it.

Thus much I thought good to premise concerning this, the great and most glorious name of God ; because it will make way for our better understanding the words of my text, wherein he is pleased to manifest himself under the same notion that is intimated to us by that name. For here we find, that Moses being ordered by God to carry the children of Israel out of Egypt, he said unto him, in the words before my text, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you ; and they shall say to me, What is his name ? what shall I say unto them ?" Then it follows in

my text, "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Where we may observe, that he speaks of himself only as being in general, "I am that I am," and absolutely, "I am;" and so manifests himself unto Moses under the same notion that is signified by his great name before spoken of. And, therefore, some of the rabbins have, not improbably, conjectured, that the proper pronunciation of that great name is Jehveh. So that as God, speaking of himself, saith in the first person, "I am," so when we speak of him, he would have us only to say in the third person, "He is." Be sure, that which God is pleased here to say of himself will give us great light into the proper sense and meaning of that name, as coming from a root of the same signification. In-somuch that God himself seems here to explain to us the reason wherefore he is called Jehovah, by saying of himself, "I am that I am," and simply, "I am." Both which expressions we shall now, by his assistance, briefly consider.

First, therefore, when Moses asked God's name, he answered, "I am that I am." He doth not say, I am the great, the living, the true, the everlasting God; he doth not say, I am the almighty Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the whole world; but, "I am that I am:" intimating, that if Moses desired such a name of God as might fully describe his nature as in itself, that is a thing impossible, there being no words to be found in any language whereby to express the glory of an infinite Being, especially so as that finite creatures should be able fully to conceive it; yet, however, in these words he is pleased to acquaint us what kind of thoughts he

would have us to entertain of him. Insomuch, that could we but rightly apprehend what is couched under and intended by them, we should doubtless have as high and true conceptions of God as it is possible for creatures to reach to. For these words do questionless contain as full and clear an answer to the intent of Moses' question, as the question itself was capable of: but Moses desiring to know God's name, intended certainly by that to understand his nature, who and what he is. To which he is pleased to return this answer, "I am that I am;" or, as the words also signify, "I will be that I will be." Which expression suggests to us these following notions of the most high God.

First, that he is one Being, existing in and of himself. His unity is implied in that he saith, "I;" his existence, in that he saith, "I AM;" his existence in and of himself, in that he saith, "I AM THAT I AM;" that is, I am in and of myself, not receiving any thing from, nor depending upon any other. For he that is not of himself, but depends continually upon another for his being, as all creatures do, can never certainly say, "I am that I am," or, "I will be that I will be," because he can never be sure but that immediately he may not be: for he from whom we receive our being may deprive us of it when he pleaseth. So that we can never promise ourselves to be any longer than just we find ourselves in being; because it is in God that we not only "live and move," but "have our" very "being" too, Acts xvii. 28. And not only we, but all the creatures in the world, subsist continually in this one universal Being, that existeth in and of himself: insomuch, that should he cease to give being to other things, all things

would immediately cease to be. Hence Job, in his complaints, wisheth that God would "let loose his hand," and "cut him off," or make an end of him, as the word may be rendered, Job vi. 9. For if he should but once let go his hold of us, and not keep us up any longer in our being, we should at the same moment fall down into nothing, and so there would be an end of us.

But here we may further observe, that, as God plainly asserts the unity of his nature, in saying "I am," so he as plainly asserts a Trinity of Persons in that nature, by calling himself אלהים in the plural number; (and three is the first number that can properly, at least in Hebrew, be called plural,) for it is here said, that Elohim said to Moses, "I am that I am."

And nothing is more usual than for these two names of God, Jehovah and Elohim, to be put together, the one of the singular, the other of the plural number; the first denoting the Unity of the Trinity, the second the Trinity in the Unity. As where it is said, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD," Deut. vi. 4. Jehovah, the LORD, signifies his essence; our God, or, as it is in Hebrew, our Elohim, signifies the Persons in that essence, of which Persons it is here said, that they are "one LORD," one Jehovah; not one Elohim. For though other adjectives and verbs too of the singular number are all along in Scripture joined with Elohim, where it is used for the true God, to show the unity of the Divine Persons in the same nature, yet אחד, "one," is never joined with it. We never read of one Elohim, for that would confound the Persons, being as much as to say one Divine Persons, as if they were not distinct

from one another; but it is always said, they are "one Jehovah," or essence.

And so St. John expresseth it, where, speaking of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he saith, *οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι*, "these three are one Being," 1 John v. 7; John x. 30. For so the word *ἓν* plainly signifies. And hence it is, that the council of Nice declared the Son to be *ὁμοούσιον*, of the same essence or substance with the Father; there being no word certainly in all the Greek tongue whereby they could have expressed themselves in that great mystery more agreeably to the words as well as to the sense of Scripture, where God is pleased to say of himself, that he is one Jehovah, *μία οὐσία*, "one essence." In which, although there be Elohim, three distinct Persons, yet all and every one of them may equally say, as they do in my text, "I am that I am."

Which expression implies also, that as God is only one, so he is a most pure and simple Being. For here we see he admits nothing into the manifestation of himself but pure essence; saying, "I am that I am," that is, being itself, without any mixture or composition. And, therefore, we must not conceive of God, as made up of several parts, or faculties, or ingredients, but only as one who only "is that he is," and whatsoever is in him is himself. And although we read of several properties attributed to him in Scripture, as wisdom, goodness, justice, &c., we must not apprehend them to be several powers, habits, or qualities, as they are in us: for as they are in God, they are neither distinguished from one another, nor from his nature or essence, in whom they are said to be. In whom, I say, they are said to be, for, to speak properly, they

are not in him, but are his very essence or nature itself; which, acting severally upon several objects, seems to us to act from several properties or perfections in him; whereas, all the difference is only in our different apprehensions of the same thing. God in himself is a most simple and pure act, and, therefore, cannot have any thing in him but what is that most simple and pure act itself; which, seeing it bringeth upon every creature what it deserves, we apprehend it is an act of justice, and, therefore, call God a just God: seeing it doth not always punish sin so soon as we conceive it might, we apprehend it is an act of patience, and, therefore, call God a patient God: seeing, although it doth certainly one time or other punish the offence, yet, upon some other account, it often pardons the offender, we apprehend it as an act of mercy, and, therefore, call God a merciful God. The same may be said of all his other properties: they are all one and the same act in him; but we are forced to apprehend them severally, by reason of the finiteness of our understandings, who are not able to conceive of an infinite Being wholly as it is in itself, but only by piecemeal, as it manifesteth itself to us: whereas God, whose understanding is infinite as himself, doth not apprehend himself under the distinct notions of wisdom, or goodness, or justice, or the like, but only as Jehovah. And, therefore, in my text, he doth not say, I am wise, or just, or good, but simply "I am that I am."

Moreover, seeing God is here pleased to say only that he is, without respect to time or place, it necessarily follows, that he is in all places, at all times, as St. Augustinewords it, "In all things, beyond all things, everywhere, wholly the same God." So

that he is now as really here, as he is in the highest heavens : only he is said to be there in a more especial manner, because he unveils and manifests himself in a more especial manner to his creatures that are there. And, for the like reason, he is said to be specially present in places dedicated to his service, because he distributes his blessings more especially to those who meet to serve him in such places ; according to his promise, saying, “ In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee,” *Exod. xx. 24* ; that is, I will come unto thee by blessing of thee. But as to his essence, he cannot be said to come or go from one place to another, for he is in all places alike ; and being always everywhere, he must needs, likewise, always know everything that is, and everything that is done, in the whole world. But “ such knowledge is too wonderful for us ;” neither is it communicable to any creature ; it being his great prerogative who can say, *Wheresoever any thing is, there “ I am that I am.”* And as the omnipresence and omniscience, so also the omnipotence of God is clearly implied in those words ; for that, likewise, being a perfection, yea, such a perfection, that without it there can be no perfection at all, it must needs be in him who “ is that he is,” even Being and Perfection itself. To this purpose, Jonathan’s Chaldee paraphrase upon the words is very observable ; who interprets “ I am that I am,” by “ I am he that spake the word, and the world was made ; that spake the word, and all things were made.” The Jerusalem Targum understands them also in the same sense, even of the power of God, whereby he is able to command all things out of nothing, only with a word speaking : and indeed he being Jehovah, Being itself, whatsoever he wills

should be, must needs be just as he would have it. And this is the proper notion of omnipotence, whereby God "doth whatsoever he pleaseth," Psa. cxv. 3. Thus it was that he made all things at first, only by expressing his will and pleasure that they should be, and immediately they were. He only said, "Let there be light, and there was light. Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and it was so." Thus it was that our Saviour cured the leper, and so manifested his Divine power: he only said, "I will; be thou clean," and immediately the leprosy was gone, and the man was perfectly clean, Matt. viii. 3. And thus it was that he raised Lazarus from the dead: he only said, "Lazarus, come forth!" and the words were no sooner out of his mouth, but Lazarus came out of his grave, John xi. 43, 44. And thus it is that God still governs and orders every thing in the world, only by willing it should be so, and so it is: and therefore, the apostle saith, "Who hath resisted his will?" Rom. ix. 19; implying his will to be the same with his power, which none can resist. Well then may he be called, "The Lord God Almighty," seeing he is that he is, and doth what he will in the whole world.

Furthermore, Almighty God, by saying, "I am that I am," assures us also, that he always is the same that he is, without any variableness or shadow of change, James i. 17; and therefore, he makes use of his name Jehovah (of the same signification) to show his immutability, saying, "I am Jehovah, I change not; therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed," Mal. iii. 6. Where we may likewise observe, that his immutability, signified by this name, is to be understood not only of his essence, but likewise of his decrees, his threats, and promises.

For he gives this as the reason why they were not consumed,—because he is Jehovah, who doth not change nor alter his mind, but faithfully performs the promises which he had made them. Hence it is that we read in Moses and the prophets, when he threatens any judgment, or promises any blessing to his people, he commonly confirmeth it by saying, “Thus saith the Lord,” or, “I am the Lord,” or, “Ye shall know that I am the Lord.” In all which places he brings his great name in, as an argument of the immutability of his counsel; that which he saith shall most certainly come to pass, because he that saith it is the Lord, Jehovah. And by this we may see into the true meaning of that, which hath hitherto seemed so obscure a place, where God saith to Moses, “I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them,” *Exod. vi. 2, 3*; that is, I never made known myself, nor confirmed my promise to them, as I now do to thee, by saying, “I am Jehovah.” For this is the first place in all the Scriptures where these words are used, as an entire proposition of themselves, for the confirmation of what is said, but after this, nothing is more frequent. And here God both begins and ends what he saith with them; and assures the children of Israel, that he will now actually perform what he had promised to their fathers, by saying, “I am Jehovah;” which, in effect, is the same with, “I am that I am.”

I shall refer only to one more of the many perfections signified by these words, and that is, the eternity of God, which is so plainly contained in them, that the Arabic version renders them by “I am Eternal, that passeth not away:” and so do the

fathers, both Greek and Latin, interpret them. St. John also gives us the same sense of them, where he calls God, "who is, who was, and who is to come," Rev. i. 4. For that he intended that as a proper name of God, is plain from the original, where the apostle wishes to the Asiatic churches grace and peace, not from him "who is," but from "him who is, who was, and who is to come;" that is, from Jehovah, from "I am that I am." But here the apostle speaks of God's eternity according to our capacities, who are apt to apprehend it as past, present, and to come: whereas, if we speak of God, as in himself eternal, he is not measured by time, as our apprehensions of him are, who are therefore forced to use these words, "before" and "after," "past" and "to come," to express the several successions of time by. But they are no way properly applicable to eternity, as in itself; for that is always present: and therefore God doth plainly acquaint us here, both with his eternity, and with the true notion of it, saying, "I am that I am;" that is, I always am, not younger at the beginning, nor older at the end of time, but always one and the same eternal God. Thus also our blessed Saviour signified his eternity, by saying, "Before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 58. For had he been measured by time, as all creatures are, he must have said, "Before Abraham was, I was;" but he saith, "Before Abraham was, I am;" and so useth the same expression of himself, which the eternal God doth in my text, and so demonstrates himself to be the same God who here said, "I am that I am."

Having thus attempted something towards the explication of the first of these mysterious sayings, we shall now briefly consider the other, whereby

God calls himself absolutely, "I am." For that it is a proper name is plain, because, though it be a verb of the first person, it is here used as a noun substantive, and the nominative case to another verb of the third person, "I am hath sent me." A strange expression! but when God speaks of himself, he cannot be confined to grammar rules, being infinitely above and beyond the reach of all languages in the world. And therefore, it is no wonder that, when he would reveal himself, he goes out of our common speaking one to another, and expresseth himself in a way peculiar to himself, and such as is suitable and proper to his own nature and glory.

Hence, therefore, as when he speaks of himself, and his own eternal essence, he saith, "I am that I am;" so when he speaks of himself, with reference to his creatures, and especially to his people, he saith, "I am." He doth not say, "I am their friend, their father, or their protector." He doth not say, "I am their light, their life, their guide, their strength, or tower;" but only, "I am." He sets, as it were, his hand to a blank, that his people may write under it what they please, that is good for them. As if he should say, "Are they weak? I am strength. Are they poor? I am riches. Are they in trouble? I am comfort. Are they sick? I am health. Are they dying? I am life. Have they nothing? I am all things. I am wisdom and power, I am justice and mercy, I am grace and goodness, I am glory, beauty, holiness, eminency, super-eminency, perfection, all-sufficiency, eternity, Jehovah, I am. Whatsoever is suitable to their nature, or convenient for them in their several conditions, that I am. Whatsoever is amiable in itself, or desirable unto them, that I am. Whatsoever is

pure and holy, whatsoever is great or pleasant, whatsoever is good or needful to make men happy, that I am." So that, in short, God here represents himself unto us as a universal good, and leaves us to make the application of it to ourselves, according to our several wants, capacities, and desires, by saying only in general, "I AM."

Thus I have given you what light I could into both these expressions, whereby the most high God hath manifested himself and his glory to us, saying, "I am that I am," and in general, "I am:" in speaking to which, I have been careful to say nothing of him but what is warranted by himself in his holy word; as being conscious to myself, that he hath heard every word which I have spoken of him. And I dare assure you also in his name, that he hath taken notice all along, how every one here present hath been affected with what they have heard concerning him. And certainly nothing in the world can be more apt or proper to raise our affections, and to put us upon stedfast resolutions to serve, honour, and obey God, than such thoughts of him as I have now endeavoured to suggest to you from these words: which could we always keep fresh in our minds and memories, what excellent persons should we then become! How humble and lowly in our own eyes! How devout and pious towards God! How loyal and submissive to our sovereign! How just and righteous towards all men! And what happy and comfortable lives should we then lead both in this world and the next!

For when we apprehend a Being so infinitely above us, as Jehovah is, how low and mean, how little and despicable must we needs seem in our own eyes, who in comparison of him are next to nothing, and may

be made so altogether whensoever he pleaseth ! And did we always consider the vast distance between him and us, every time that we approach into his special presence, or pray unto him, how humbly should we prostrate ourselves before him ! With what reverence and godly fear should we serve and worship him ! And wheresoever we are, did we always apprehend God as present with us, and looking over us, how fearful should we be to offend, how careful to please him in every thing we think, or speak, or do ! For how can we think of so great a God, and not fear him ! of so powerful a God, and not obey him ! How can we think of so immutable a God, and not trust in him ! of so good, so universally good a God, and not desire and love him with all our hearts and souls ! Were our minds always thus running upon God, nothing doubtless would seem good or lovely, nothing pleasing or desirable, nothing great, or strong, or holy, or any thing, but only He. Insomuch that we should account it our only wisdom to know him, our only freedom to serve him, our only honour to honour him, and the only pleasure to please him, and the only riches we can ever have to enjoy him.

And, besides, they who think upon God aright, must needs, as I have shown, apprehend him as the Lord of hosts, the universal Monarch of the world, " By whom kings reign, and princes decree justice," and from whom they receive whatsoever authority or power they have to act. And while men thus think of God, how is it possible for them to resist or rebel against their lawful prince ! For this would be in effect to fight against God himself, which they who ever think of him dare never do : nay, they would be so far from that, that they would not dare to do

any ill thing to gain the whole world, for fear of displeasing Him who made and governs it; and therefore, must needs take all the care they can to square all their actions according to the strictest rules of justice and equity, that so they may approve themselves to him.

But who is able to express the happiness of those who are always thus thinking upon God? None, surely, but they who have it. They can tell you that there is more solid joy and comfort, more real delight and satisfaction of mind in one single thought of God rightly formed, than all the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this world, put them all together, are able to afford. But how happy then must they needs be, whose thoughts are always fixed upon God! They live above this world, and so are never troubled or disturbed at any thing that happens in it. For whatsoever happens they are still beholding infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, ordering and disposing of it, so as to make it turn to God's glory and their good. And, therefore, the same things which ruffle and discompose the minds of other men, to them are matter of joy and triumph. By which means they live in heaven, even whilst they are upon earth, and are always ready and prepared to go thither, where they shall most perfectly and eternally behold, enjoy, and praise him, who, and who alone can say of himself, **I AM THAT I AM.**

Wherefore, as ever we desire to be truly humble, or holy, or loyal, or just, or happy, we must endeavour all we can to keep our minds continually possessed with such thoughts of God as have now been put into them; and let us not defer it any longer, but begin it now while we are in his special presence,

speaking and hearing of him. For which purpose, therefore, let us call in all our scattered thoughts from all things here below, and raise them up, and unite them all upon the most high God, apprehending him not under the idea, image, or likeness of any thing else, but as infinitely greater, and higher, and better than all things: as One existing in and of himself, and giving essence and existence to all things in the world besides himself: as One so pure and simple that there is nothing in him but himself, but essence and being itself: as One so infinite and omnipotent, that wheresoever any thing else is in the whole world, there he is, and beyond the world, where nothing else is, there all things are, because he is there: as One so wise, so knowing, so omniscient, that he at this very moment, and always, sees what all the angels are doing in heaven; what all the fowls are doing in the air; what all the fishes are doing in the waters; what all the devils are doing in hell; what all the men, and beasts, and the very insects are doing upon earth; and what we in particular are now doing here: as One so powerful, so omnipotent, that he can do whatsoever he will, only by willing it should be done: as One so great, so good, so glorious, so immutable, so transcendant, so infinite, so incomprehensible, so eternal,—what shall I say? so Jehovah, that the more we think of him, the more we admire him, the more we adore him, the more we love him, the more we may and ought; our highest conceptions of him being as much beneath him as our greatest services come short of what we owe him.

Seeing, therefore, we cannot think of God so highly as he is, let us think of him as highly as we can: and for that end let us get above ourselves, and

above the world, and raise up our thoughts higher and higher, and higher still; and when we have got them up as high as possibly we can, let us apprehend a Being infinitely higher than the highest of them; and then, finding ourselves at a loss, amazed, confounded at such an infinite height of infinite perfections, let us fall down in humble and hearty desires to be freed from these dark prisons wherein we are now immured; that we may take our flight into eternity, and by the merits and mediation of the ever-blessed Jesus, mount up to the highest heavens, and there see this infinite Being "face to face," and enjoy him for ever.

In the meanwhile, let us of the church militant here on earth, join with the church triumphant in heaven, in praising and magnifying his great and glorious name, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: the whole earth is full of his glory. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Amen, Hallelujah; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, to our God, the great, the all-wise, almighty, everlasting God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one Jehovah, for ever and ever.

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE THE BEST GUARD AGAINST SIN.

PSALM XVI. 8.

I HAVE SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME: BECAUSE HE IS
AT MY RIGHT HAND, I SHALL NOT BE MOVED.

As we are all conceived and born, so naturally we all live in sin; our whole lives being nothing else, in a manner, but one continued sin against him in whom we live; against Almighty God who made us, and who made us on purpose that we might glorify, serve, and worship him, by observing those wise and good laws which he for that purpose hath prescribed to us: whereas we cannot but be conscious to ourselves that we have either totally neglected, or else transgressed, or at least come so far short of all his said laws, that we have not punctually observed any one of them, since we came into the world, to this day; but have rather "followed the devices and desires of our own sinful hearts," and have been hurried about by our corrupt humours and passions, which carry us headlong directly contrary to the rules which God hath set us; so that we are always either doing what we ought not to do, or not doing what we ought, or at least, not so as we ought to do it; and so no way answer the end of our creation, but live to no purpose in the world, or rather to a very ill one: for instead of serving and glorifying our great Creator, we live in open rebel-

lion against him, and do what we can to reproach and dishonour his sacred name; which is so offensive and displeasing to his Divine majesty, that it is no wonder that he so orders it in his providence, that we meet with many troubles and crosses in the world. It is rather a wonder that we meet with no more; for if he should punish us according as our sins deserve, he might justly strip us of all the mercies we enjoy, and inflict all manner of judgments upon us: he may justly divest us of our estates, and reduce us to the extremity of want and poverty: he may justly deprive us of our health, and cause us to lie languishing upon a sick-bed all our days: he may justly take all our friends and relations from us, or make them enemies and scourges to us: he may justly blast our credit and reputation in the world, and make us the scorn and derision of all that are about us: yea, he may justly condemn us immediately to everlasting shame and torment, and not suffer us to breathe any longer in his air, or tread any longer upon his earth, but command us to go out of this place into the infernal pit, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." If he should lay any, or all of these punishments upon us, we must still acknowledge him to be "just in all his ways, and righteous in all his judgments;" for we have sinned against him, and therefore lie perfectly at his mercy: he may do with us what he pleases, and if he should execute the severity of his wrath upon us, it is no more than what our iniquities have deserved from him.

Now, this being our present state and condition by nature, it cannot surely but be worth the while to bethink ourselves what to do in it, and to consider whether there may not be some way found out

whereby we may, at least in some measure, keep ourselves from those sins which we have hitherto been so apt to fall into, and so prevent those many and great judgments which God hath threatened, and may justly every moment inflict upon us for them. That the thing is possible to be done we know, because others have done it before us; and that we are as capable of doing it as they were, we know likewise, because we have the same power and means to do it as they had. The only question is, what course they took for the effecting of it; and, by consequence, what course we must take, if we desire to do it effectually. For this, therefore, our best way will be to consult such of whom we are fully assured that they really did it; amongst whom we cannot but acknowledge David to have been one of the most eminent, as being able to say, by the Spirit of truth itself bearing witness with him, "I was also upright before God, and I kept myself from mine iniquity," *Psa. xviii. 23*; and who therefore elsewhere saith, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about," *Psa. iii. 6*. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," *Psa. xxiii. 4*. But how did David thus keep himself from sin, yea, from his own, his beloved sin, so as to fear no evil that could befall him for it? What course did he take? what method did he use for the doing of it? To understand that, we need go no further than my text, wherein he plainly acquaints us with it, saying, "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." As if he had said, Although by nature I am very apt to be moved from my duty into sin, and so into all the troubles which

attend it, yet I keep myself from it, by setting the Lord always before me; for so long as he is at my right hand, I am sure not to be moved, so as to fall either into sin, or any real misery.

This, therefore, being the great means that David used, and found so effectual in this case, I shall endeavour to explain it more particularly to you; and for that purpose shall consider.

I. What it is properly to set the Lord always before us.

II. How much this conduceth to our continuing steadfast both in our duty to God, and in his love and favour towards us, so as not to be moved either to do or suffer any real evil in the world.

I. In speaking to the first, I suppose I need not tell you whom we are here to understand by the Lord; even the Lord of hosts, the most mighty and eternal God, who made all things by the power of his word; who upholdeth all things by the word of his power, and ordereth all things in the world according to the pleasure of his own will; who is not only infinitely wise, and powerful, and great, and just, and merciful, and good, and glorious in all perfections, but infinite wisdom, and power, and greatness, and justness, and mercy, and goodness, and glory, and perfection itself: such infinite wisdom, that in every thing he doeth, he proposeth the best ends, chooseth the best means, and useth them in the best manner that can be: such infinite power, that he can do what he will, by willing it to be done: such infinite greatness, that he comprehendeth all things, and is comprehended of nothing: such infinite justice, that he punishes every sin that is committed: such infinite mercy, that he pardoneth every sinner that repenteth: such infinite goodness,

that every thing he is, or doeth, or makes, is good ; yea, the best that it is possible for it to be ; so that his goodness is over all his works : such infinite glory, that he displays himself, and shines forth in, upon, through, and beyond all the creatures in heaven and earth : such infinite perfection, that as he hath infinite perfections in him, so every perfection in him is infinite ; and therefore, when we speak of the Lord, we are not to apprehend him as like to any thing we know, but as one infinitely greater, and higher, and better, and holier than any thing that we are able to comprehend : in comparison of whom, nothing else is great, or high, or good, or holy, or anything at all.

This is the Lord, that Almighty God whom David did, and we ought, always to set before us : not as if he were not before us unless we set him there, nor yet as if we could set him before us more than he really is ; but we are said to set the Lord before us, when we actually believe, and are fully persuaded, that he is with us, and sees us, as he really is and doth continually ; when we exercise that faith which, as the apostle saith, is “ the evidence of things not seen,” and so possesseth us with as firm a confidence, and as great a certainty that God is present with us, as that any thing we see is so, although we cannot perceive him by any of our senses : as Job observed of him, saying, “ Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not ; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not,” Job ix. 11. And the reason is, because our senses cannot perceive any thing but their own respective objects, which are all matter, diversely put together, modified, and agitated, so as that each of them may move and affect its proper sense, or that part of our bodies which is

fitted for it, by being so composed and ordered, that it is apt to be affected with such particular impressions as are made upon it, and no other. And hence it is that no sensible object can be perceived by any other than its own proper sense; we can no more see a sound or hear a colour, than as if there was no such thing in nature.

But now, God being a most simple and pure Spirit, and so having no body nor matter in him, he is not a proper object for any of our bodily senses, and therefore can be no more perceived by them, than as if there were no such Being in the world. But is there no way then whereby it is possible to perceive him? Yes, surely; we may and ought to perceive him by that spiritual sense, as I may call it, which he hath implanted in us, suitable to his own nature, even by a firm and stedfast belief in him, whereby we are as fully persuaded that he is, as that we are; and that he is wheresoever we are, as that we ourselves are there: for this we are fully assured of from his own mouth, saying, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool," Isa. lxvi. 1; and, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord," Jer. xxiii. 24. And by his Holy Spirit, speaking in David, and saying unto him, "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; or if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me," Psal. cxxxix.

5, 7—10. Neither are we assured of this only by his word, but likewise by his works; for “all things were made,” and all things are continually preserved and governed, “by him;” and therefore nothing can be remote or distant from him: it is in him “we live, and move, and have our being;” and therefore it is impossible that we should either live, or move, or be anywhere but where he is; for, to suppose ourselves to be where God is not, is to suppose ourselves to be and not to be at the same time; for our very being is in him, and depends altogether upon his presence with us, and so giving existence to us; insomuch, that should he withdraw his presence from us but one moment, we should in that moment drop down to nothing, and so cease to be; and therefore, nothing can be more present to us than God is, nor indeed so much; he being not only always with us, but in us, and we in him.

And seeing God is always thus present with us, and in us, we are thereby assured, likewise, that he, being all wisdom and knowledge, must needs be intimately acquainted with everything we do, with everything we speak, and with everything we think, or will, or nill, or desire, or abhor; even with all the several affections and inclinations of our souls, as well as with the several actions, gestures, or motions of our bodies: as David saith, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity,” *Psa. xciv. 11.* “He saw,” before the flood, “that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,” *Gen. vi. 5.* Which he could not have done, had he not seen every thought of every man’s heart in the

whole world, which he doth more plainly than any man knows what he himself thinks ; which, therefore, every man ought to be constantly assured of, as David was when he said to God, “ O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether,” Psa. cxxxix. 1—4.

And as there is no man, nor any thing in man, so neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight ; for “ all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do ;” as we read in Heb. iv. 13. All creatures have to do with God, and he with them : and whether they know him or not, be sure he always knows them, and takes particular notice not only of all things in general, but of everything particularly ; as he did at the beginning of the world, when it is said, that “ God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good,” Gen. i. 31. So he doth to this day : he continually looks upon everything that is, what it is, and where it is, and whether it be good or evil : he every moment sees every angel and glorified saint in heaven ; every devil and damned soul in hell ; every fowl in the air ; every fish in the sea ; every animal, and whatsoever else is upon or within the earth, from the highest to the lowest, from the greatest to the least that is, Matt. x. 30. And among other things, he sees every one of us particularly, and knows everything that every one of us ever thought, or spoke, or did, since we were born to this moment ; and at this moment he looks

into every one of our hearts, and sees what we are thinking, and how we are affected with what we hear concerning him; and so he doth as to every man, woman, or child, that ever was, or at this day is, upon the face of the earth. How well then may we cry out with David here, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it!" Psa. cxxxix. 6. And with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33.

From hence, therefore, it appears, what ground we have to believe that God is always certainly present with us, so as perfectly to know every action and circumstance of our whole lives: and so long as we actually think upon, and really believe this, so long we may be truly said to "set the Lord before us:" and such a persuasion as this will have the same force and power upon us, as if we saw him with our eyes. But that it may have its whole effect towards the keeping of us from being moved, we are further to observe, that by Jehovah, the Lord, we are here to understand, as the Divine nature in general, so each Divine person subsisting in it, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they being all equally one and the same Jehovah, the Lord. And, therefore, in order to our setting the Lord before us as we ought, we must believe that all and every one of these Divine persons is always present with us.

First, we are to believe that God the Father is always present with us as such, even as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our God and Father, as Christ himself hath assured us, saying, "I ascend unto my Father, and vour Father; and to my God, and your God," John

xx. 17. And therefore commands us, wheresoever we are, to address ourselves to him as our Father, saying, "Our Father which art in heaven," Matt. vi. 9. And soon after tells us, that our heavenly Father seeth in secret, and knows what things we have need of, Matt. vi. 18—32. Whereby he plainly signifies his pleasure, that he would have us set God before us, under that consideration and relation to us, as he is our Father; which will contribute much towards our not being moved at anything that shall happen to us.

And as we are to believe God the Father, so likewise God the Son, to be always with us, even the eternal Son of God, who was pleased to become the Son of man too, by assuming our human nature into his Divine person, so as to be both God and man in one and the same person: by which means, although the human nature which he assumed never was or can be in any more than one place at once, yet the same Divine person, to which that nature is united, always was, and is, and ever will be, in all places, and know all things in heaven and earth. And therefore we read, that when he was in his mortal body upon earth, he was at the same time in heaven, John iii. 13, and everywhere, Matt. xviii. 20. He knew the very thoughts of the scribes and pharisees, Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25. He saw Nathanael under the fig-tree, and knew his heart so well, as to say, he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, John i. 47. He knew that the woman of Samaria that talked with him had had "five husbands," although she herself said, she "had no husband," John iv. 17, 18. He knew that Lazarus was dead before anybody had told him so, John xi. 14. He knew which of his disciples intended

to betray him, for all that he endeavoured to keep it from him as much as he could, John xiii. 11. Yea, St. Peter appealed to his omniscience, whether he did not love him, saying to our Saviour, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," John xxi. 17. And as Christ was thus in all places, and knew all things, whilst his human nature was still upon earth; so when he was to ascend in that to heaven, he promised, notwithstanding, that he himself would still continue with his church upon earth, saying to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 20.

Hence, therefore, although the manhood of Christ be now at the right hand of God in heaven, and will not come down from thence till the end of the world, yet he himself, in his Divine person, to whom that manhood in which he suffered for us is united, is always present with us: so that whatsoever other company we are in, he still makes one; or, if we have no other, be sure we have his company where-soever we are; and therefore can never be alone: for he that is at God's right hand in his human nature, in his Divine is always at ours too, ready to aid and assist us upon all occasions, if we do but make our applications to him, as we well may to one that is never out of sight or hearing. And this I look upon as our great preservative and security from evil and danger, that he who so loved us as to give himself for us, never leaves us, nor forsakes us, but always keeps close to us, and nearer than any danger or evil can be. For by this means we are always sure of a true and Almighty Friend at hand, who, "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 18;

who was once subject to all the infirmities of our nature, but without sin; he was hungry and thirsty, weary and sleepy; he felt pain and sorrow, and at last the very pangs of death itself; and therefore cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and know how to give suitable relief to all and every one of them: who also is still in our nature, and therefore cannot but have a great love and kindness for it, and for all that partake of it; yea, who is always interceding for us in heaven, and always present with us upon earth too; and therefore we cannot doubt but he will do all he can for us. And what can he not do for us that he will? And what can he not enable us also to do, when St. Paul could say, upon his own experience, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me?" Phil. iv. 13. Which plainly shows, that Christ was always so present with him, as to supply him continually with grace and power to do good, all the good that was required of him. And we certainly may have the same experience as he had, if we do but do as he did, even set Christ always before us, by believing that he is always present and ready to assist us; which, as I have now shown, we have all the reason in the world to believe, and therefore must act against reason grounded upon God's word, unless we do it.

The same may be said, likewise, concerning the third person in the most sacred Trinity, even the Holy Ghost, who, proceeding from the Father and the Son, and being of the same nature and substance with them, must needs be where they are; that is, wheresoever anything in the world is: but as to all those who believe in Christ, he is in a peculiar manner with them, according to Christ's own

promise, saying unto them, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth," John xiv. 16, 17. From whence it appears, that the Spirit of God, even as such, doth not only come to us now and then, but makes his constant abode with us; yea, he dwells in us, so as to consecrate our very bodies into temples, places of God's special residence, as the apostle informs the believing Corinthians, saying, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. And elsewhere: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. And if the Spirit of God inhabits or dwells in us, he is always ready to enlighten our minds, to inform our judgments, to direct our thoughts, to awaken our consciences, to regulate our passions, to purify and comfort our hearts, and to sanctify us wholly in soul, body, and spirit. And we may well set him before us, who is always thus by us, and in us; as David did, when he said to God, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" Psa. cxxxix. 7. Whereby he himself hath taught us how he did, and we ought to set God always before us; even by being fully assured, that he and his Holy Spirit is always with us wheresoever we are; and that it is as impossible for us to be where he is not, as it is for him not to be.

From these things, therefore, duly considered, we may easily gather the full sense and meaning of these words, "I have set the Lord alway before me;" according to the exposition which St. Peter himself hath given of them, where he renders them, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face," Acts ii. 25. So

that, in order to our doing of it aright, it is necessary that we firmly believe, and be firmly persuaded in our minds, that the Lord, the Almighty Creator and Governor of the world, is everywhere; and particularly in the place where we are, just by us, and with us, and in us: that he clearly sees every act we do, hears every word we speak, and knows every thought, passion, and motion of our minds; that he is perfectly acquainted with all our purposes and designs, with what we intend to do, whether we do it or not: that he takes particular notice of every particular action and circumstance of our whole lives: that God the Father is always present with us, to preserve, maintain and provide for us; that God the Son is always with us, to defend, govern, assist, and strengthen us; that God the Holy Spirit is always present with us, to sanctify, direct, and comfort us. And all this we must believe, not only now and then, but, as it is here expressed, “always;” so as never to doubt of the truth of these things, nor suffer them to go out of our minds, but to be always acting our faith in God, as present with us, and to be always looking upon him as always looking upon us. And then we may be truly said to “set the Lord alway before us.”

And if he be thus at our “right hand,” we shall “not be moved;” as David had found by experience, and therefore confidently asserts of himself, “I shall not be moved:” from what? “from faith to infidelity, from good to evil,” as St. Jerome expounds. And so certainly the words, being spoken indefinitely, ought to be understood in their full extent: I shall not be moved upon any account, in any respect whatsoever, from no manner of good, nor into any manner of evil, but shall always remain stedfast

and unmoveable as a rock, established and supported by that Almighty Power that is always with me.

The same may be said of all that "always set the Lord before them." They "shall never be moved," so as to fall into, and live in any gross sin; they "shall never be moved," so as to fail in any necessary duty unto God; they shall "never be moved" from a good to an evil state and condition of life; and all because they "set God alway before them," and so have him always at "their right hand."

II. Which is the other thing I promised to show, and may easily do it: for,

He who "sets God alway before his eyes," so as always to be thinking of him that is the only good, how can he so much as think of anything that is evil? For this would be to think at the same time of two things directly contrary, yea, contradictory to one another; which is impossible. But how then can he do any evil, and so act contrary both to him he thinks of, and to his own thoughts of him? The thoughts of God as always present with him fill his soul with such a sense of his greatness and glory, that he cannot but dread the thoughts of doing anything offensive or displeasing to him; and can never be moved to do it by any temptation whatsoever: for whensoever he is tempted to any sin, he still considers that God sees him, and saith within himself, as Joseph did, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. And, therefore, whensoever you commit any sinful act, you may conclude that you did not think of God at that time, nor believe him to be present with you; as David observed, saying, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes," Psa. xxxvi. 1

That is, every sin that a man committeth, is a plain demonstration to me, that he doth not set God before his eyes; for if he did, he could not but fear him, so as not to dare to break his laws, and so incense his wrath and indignation against himself; but would rather abhor himself that he ever hath offended God, and resolve to do so no more; as we see in Job: "I have heard of thee," saith he, "by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 5, 6. Where we may observe, what a mighty force the sight of God had upon him, it struck him as it were down, he was not able to stand under it, but fell down into an utter abhorrence of himself before him. And it was this that kept him from oppressing or injuring the poor, by withholding his alms from them; as he himself saith, "If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction from God was a terror to me; and by reason of his highness I could not endure," Job xxxi. 19—23. He saw, it seems, the highness and majesty of God, which struck such a terror into him, that he could not endure himself, nor the thoughts of doing anything that might offend him: and so it is doubtless with all who set God always before them; his presence cannot but strike that awe into them, that they will not dare to break his laws, and so provoke and affront him to his face. As for example:

How can they blaspheme or profane the sacred name of God, who believe at the same time that he hears every word they speak against him, and will certainly one time or other be revenged upon them for it? How can they be high and proud in their own conceit, who believe themselves to be in the presence of the most high God, who is not only infinitely above them, but hath told them, that he "resists the proud, and gives grace only to the humble?" How can they indulge themselves in lust or luxury, in drunkenness or debauchery, who believe at the same time that God sees them, and will, ere long, call them to an account for it? How can they oppress the poor, or wrong their neighbour, by lying, stealing, cheating, or the like, who believe that the eye of God is upon them, and his hand ready to strike them for it? How can they play the hypocrite, and dissemble with God, or retain any revenge, malice, envy, or hatred against their neighbour, who believe that God sees their hearts, and knows how they stand affected, both towards himself, and towards all men? In a word, how can they allow themselves in any vice or wickedness whatsoever, who set God always before them, and believe that the Judge of the whole world takes particular notice of them all the while? A constant belief of this would soon make them weary of their sins, and turn their inclinations to them into utter abhorrence and detestation of them.

As, suppose a company of traitors should meet together to consult how to carry on a rebellion against the king, and while they were at it, the king himself should always happen to come in among them; how confounded would they be at his presence! how soon would they leave off consulting any more about

it! Every sin is an act of treason and rebellion against the supreme Monarch of the world, who is always privy to every step that is made towards it, and is constantly present both at the designing and acting of it; and if men did but see him as really as he is there, they would not dare so much as to think any more of it.

Hence, therefore, we may see one great reason wherefore virtue is so rare and vice so common in the world; why there are so few pious, so many wicked persons in it, even because most men live as without God in the world, never thinking of him, at least not so as to believe him to be always with them. "The wicked," saith David, "through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts," *Psa. x. 4.* And elsewhere, speaking to God, he saith, "O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them," *Psa. lxxxvi. 14.* That is the reason why they are so wicked, so proud, and violent, because they never think of God, nor set him before them; if they did that, they would soon become more holy, more humble and meek: the very thinking of him would of itself contribute very much towards it, much more when it is influenced and assisted by the Spirit of God, who usually moves upon our souls while we are thinking and acting our faith upon him, and so diverts our thoughts, and by consequence our affections, from everything that is contrary to his holy nature, and inclines our hearts to keep his laws; and, therefore, all who constantly set God before them, can never be moved so as to fall quite from him, because they are still supported and assisted by him that is at

their right hand ; and though he may sometimes see good to let go his hold of them, and suffer them to slip and stumble into sin, yet if they do not let go their hold of him too, but continue to act their faith on him, they will soon get up again and walk more steadily than ever.

A remarkable instance of which we have in St. Peter, to whom our " Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat : but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke xxii. 31, 32. From whence it appears, that although a great temptation should befall him, which should shake him very much, and endanger his total ruin, yet that his faith should not fail, and by that he should recover himself, and grow stronger afterwards : and so it came to pass ; for when he had denied his Master thrice, he turned his eyes towards him, and saw Christ turning himself, and looking upon him ; upon which he immediately called to mind the words of our Lord, how he said, " Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly," Luke xxii. 61, 62 ; and from that time forward could never be moved to deny his Master any more, but continued his faithful servant all his life long, and at last, too, laid it down for his sake. And as St. Peter, so soon as ever he saw Christ looking upon him, immediately called his sin to remembrance and repented of it ; so let any one also who is fallen into any grievous sin but look up to God or Christ, and firmly believe that he sees him, and he will soon call his sin to mind as St. Peter did, and be as much troubled for it, and as really converted from it, as he was.

And seeing this prevents our falling into, or laying long in sin, it must needs keep us likewise firm and stedfast in our duty to God; for the neglect of that being a sin, and a great one too, whatsoever conduceth towards the preserving us from sin, cannot but conduce also towards the performance of our duty; as setting of God always before us doth, in an eminent manner, insomuch that we can neither perform any duty well without it, nor ill with it. He that setteth upon any duty, without setting of God at the same time before him, goes so awkwardly about it, and is so dull and heavy, so cold and stupid in the performance of it, that it is the mere outside and shell of a duty that hath nothing of life or vigour in it, nor indeed anything of real duty; but it is a mere flat and insipid performance, neither acceptable to God, nor any way profitable to him that doeth it: whereas, he that sets God always before him, as he dare not omit any duty which God requires of him, so he dare not perform it in a careless indifferent manner, nor any other way than as God requires it to be done; as knowing that he takes notice all along not only what he doeth, but likewise how he doeth it; which if you would always remember, and think of while you are performing any duty unto God, you would be so far from running it over in a superficial manner, that you would think your whole souls too little to be employed in it.

While you are at your private devotions, where none sees you but God, if you would set yourselves solemnly, as in his presence, and duly consider that he hears every word you speak to him, and observes every motion both of your soul and body before him; how grave, how serious, how devout would

you be ! how careful to say nothing to him but what becomes you to speak, and him to hear ! how impartial would you be in examining yourselves ! how heavenly in your meditations ! how earnest in your petitions ! how free from distractions ! how cordial and sincere in the whole performance !

While you are praying or praising God in public, where he hath promised to be present with you in a more peculiar manner, did you really believe that he is so, and accordingly set him all the while before you, how humbly would you prostrate yourselves before him ! with what reverence and godly fear would you serve and worship him ! Your thoughts would be so composed, your minds so raised, and your whole souls so enlarged towards him, that you would think yourselves in heaven, joining with the glorified saints and angels in admiring, adoring, praising, and magnifying the Almighty Creator of the world ; and say with David to him, " A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," Psa. lxxxiv. 10. While you hear God's holy word read or expounded to you, did you really believe that he is there present with you, and speaks to you particularly, and acquaints you with his Divine will and pleasure what he would have you to believe and do, that you may continue in his love and favour ; how attentive would you then be, and ready to catch at every expression ! You would then receive it, " not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them who" thus " believe," and none else, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

When you are invited to our Lord's table, did you really believe Christ himself will meet you there, and apply all the merits of his death and passion to

you for the pardon of all your sins, how readily would you accept of so gracious an invitation! With what care and diligence would you prepare yourselves for it! and while you were there, did you really believe that you were then in the special presence of Christ himself, your all-sufficient, almighty, all-merciful, all-glorious Saviour; with what shamefacedness and modesty, with what reverence and humility, would you carry yourselves before him! How would you wonder to see the Son of God himself going about by his minister, and offering the bread and water of life to all that hunger and thirst after it! and how would you hunger, and thirst, and long, till it came to your turns to receive it! and how sweet would it be to your souls! what pleasure and delight would you take in eating and drinking of it! The sacrament would then seem quite another thing to you than what it used to do, and you would esteem it the greatest happiness of your lives that you have so many opportunities of being made partakers of it.

Thus you see how acting our faith in God and Christ, as really present with us all the while that we are using of them, quickens and invigorates the means of grace and salvation, and makes them effectual to the great ends for which they are appointed; so that we actually obtain the grace and salvation which is administered by them. Indeed, the setting of God always before us, is itself one of the best means we can ever use, both to procure and preserve in us a true sense of his Divine perfections, and, by consequence, all manner of grace and virtue which naturally flows from it.

For if we could be always looking upon God, and beholding his infinite wisdom, and greatness, and

love, and goodness to us, our affections would soon be taken off from all things else, and placed only upon him; for nothing would seem wise, or great, or lovely, or good, or anything, but only He; by which means our whole souls would be inflamed with love to him above all things in the world, which can never be abated, much less extinguished, so long as we keep our eye fixed upon him; for our eye will still affect our heart; and so our love to God will be rather always growing stronger and stronger, until at length it comes to its highest perfection; which cannot be till we get to heaven, where, as we shall see God perfectly, we shall love him perfectly.

But even while we are upon earth, He whom our souls love is always present with us, and manifesting his love to us; and if we really believe that he is so, how can we forbear to rejoice in him, and to please ourselves in pleasing him! We cannot but delight in the company of those we love, though they be but our fellow-creatures: what delight then must they needs have who love God above all things, in having him always in their company! Wheresoever they are, the best Friend they have in the world is always present with them; and though they cannot see him with their bodily eyes, yet believing him to be so, as the apostle speaks, they “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,” 1 Pet. i. 8.

And as this is the way whereby to live and rejoice in the Lord always, so this is the way also whereby to have the fear of God always before our eyes, even by setting him always before them.

So long as men do not think of God, nor believe him to be near them, it is no wonder if they do not fear him, nor regard whether he be pleased or displeased with them: but for a man to be fully per-

suaded that the Almighty Creator and Governor of all things is present with him, and yet to stand in no awe of him, is impossible; as he himself intimates by his prophet, saying, "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence?" Jer. v. 22. Can a guilty prisoner see his judge, and not fear him? Can a known rebel behold his prince frowning upon him, and not fear him? How much less can sinful mortals look upon the King and Judge of the whole world, as present with them, and not tremble before him! It cannot be: the thoughts of our being always under his eye would be enough certainly to strike us dead, unless we had some grounds to hope for favour and mercy at his hands, as, blessed be his great name, we have.

For we have his own word for it, that "his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation," Luke i. 50; and that "he taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy," Psal. cxlvii. 11. And therefore, as the wise man observes, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence," Prov. xiv. 26. For the more we fear him, the more cause we have to trust in him, and to hope for mercy, and all good things we can desire from him; and therefore they who always set God before them, as they cannot but always fear him, so they cannot but also put their trust and confidence in him, as always ready to protect and defend them; so that they shall never be moved from that state and condition of life which he in his infinite wisdom and goodness sees best for them.

This David found by experience, and therefore was confident of it: "Because he," saith he, "is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." And this hath been the constant experience of all good men

in all ages, even of all who always set God before them, and so have him always on their side: and if God be for them, who can be against them? If he be with them, what evil can come near them? What need they fear who have Omnipotence itself always ready to preserve them wheresoever they are? This is the argument which he himself makes use of to encourage his people, that they may fear nothing but him: "Fear thou not," saith he, "for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isa. xli. 10. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isa. xliii.

2. He may suffer them to pass through fire and water, but he will not suffer them to be hurt by either of them: he may bring them into trouble, but he will preserve them from the evil of it, and make it really good for them; and all, because he is still with them in it. Thus he was with Noah in the ark, with Joseph in prison, with Israel in the midst of the sea, with Job upon the dunghill, with David upon the mountains, with the three children in the fiery furnace, with Daniel in the lion's den, with Jeremiah in the dungeon, with Jonah in the whale's belly, and with the apostles in the common prison: and being always with them, how wonderfully did he preserve them, altering often the very course of nature, rather than anything should hurt them who set him always before them!

And if we set him before us as they did, he will be with us as he was with them; and then how

securely may we walk through all the changes and chances of this mortal life when we really believe that Almighty God and Jesus Christ, our most gracious and most merciful Father, is always present with us, by his wisdom to direct us, by his mercy to pardon us, by his grace to assist us, by his Spirit to conduct us, and by his power to defend us from all evil, or to turn it into good. What need we trouble our heads about what may, or what may not happen upon earth, when we know that our heavenly Father always stands by us, and orders every thing that occurs, to our advantage? What need we fear the devil, or all the fiends in hell, so long as the Son of God, "who loved us, and gave himself for us," is always with us, ready upon all occasions to fight for us, and to enable us to fight for him against his and our spiritual enemies? What need we be discouraged at the relics of sin within us, seeing the Holy Spirit of God is always with us, and his grace is always sufficient for us? What need we fear either shame, or pain, or trouble, or want, or weakness, or sickness, or death, or any evil whatsoever, who have glory, and ease, and joy, and all-sufficiency, and strength, and health, and life, and goodness, even God himself, continually with us? Let us but always set him before us, and we may always say with David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Psa. xxvii. 1. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling

thereof. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge," Psa. xlv. 1—3, 7. "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me," Psa. lvi. 11. "I have set the Lord alway before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

Who then would not set the Lord always before him? And who may not do it if he will, seeing no more is required to it, but constantly to believe what we cannot deny, even that he is always with us? For which purpose therefore let us not suffer ourselves to be led any longer by our senses, but let us live by faith, acting it continually upon God, as present with us, looking over us, and into us, observing all the passages of our life. Whatsoever employment we are about, let us still remember that God sees both what it is, and how we do it. Whatsoever company we are in, let us still remember that God is in it, and takes notice of everything we think, or speak, or do together. Whithersoever we go, let us still remember that God goes along with us; when we sit down, that he stands by us; and when we rise up, that he helps us. Whensoever any trouble falls upon us, let us remember, that God is present to support us under it, to make us better by it, and, when he sees good, to deliver us from it. Whatsoever danger we are in, let us still remember that no danger can be so near us as God is, who is always at hand to defend us from it, and to bless it to us. In short, whatsoever our condition be in this life, let us still remember and believe, that the all-wise God, and our most merciful Father, knows it to be good for us, and is always with us to make it so.

Could we thus accustom ourselves to call God to

mind upon all occasions, and actually believe that he is then present with us, as he really is, we should soon learn the divine art of setting him always before us; and then how circumspectly should we walk! how comfortably should we live! how steadfast and unmoveable should we be in the midst of all the storms and tempests we meet with here below! We should indeed live next door to heaven, and want nothing to complete our happiness, but to do that which we endeavour perfectly: for to have God always perfectly in our eye, so as clearly to behold his glory and goodness, is the happiness of heaven; where, our faith being turned into vision, we shall see God face to face, and so be perfectly happy in him. And so far as we set God always before us upon earth, so much we partake of the joys of heaven, and are so far happy according to our weak capacity in this world, and in the ready way to be fully, perfectly, eternally happy in the next, through his merits and mediation for us, who is always with us, even Jesus Christ our ever blessed Lord and Saviour: "To whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end."

THE UNITY OF CHRIST WITH GOD THE FATHER.

JOHN x. 30.

I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE.

ALTHOUGH God was pleased at first to imprint upon our minds as deep and clear a sense of himself as earthly creatures are capable of, yet now, by our fall, it is so defaced, that there is little of it to be seen; so little, that few take any notice at all of it, but most men live as without God in the world; and all would have done so, but that he hath been graciously pleased to reveal and make known himself to us in his holy word, by using such names, titles, and expressions of himself, whereby we are not only put in mind of him, but directed how to think, and what to believe concerning him: and whatsoever he hath thus said of himself, as we have all the reason that can be to believe it, so unless we do so, we can never recover a right and true sense of God, because not such a one as is agreeable to the revelations which he hath made of himself to us.

Among which we find, that to make himself known as plain as words could do it to our capacities, all along in the Old Testament he calls himself by two names especially, using sometimes the one, sometimes the other by itself, and sometimes both together, and they are יהוה and אלהים. The first, "Jehovah," signifies essence, or being in general,

or as the Greeks call it, τὸ ὄν; which can be but one, and therefore, that name is always of the singular number: the other name, "Elohim," is of the plural number, and yet, nevertheless, it is all along joined with verbs and adjectives of the singular, as if itself was so; which plainly shows, that though this universal essence or being be but one, yet there are several persons, or subsistences, or whatsoever else we may call them, so existing in it, that they are all, and every one, that one essence or being. And accordingly, we find frequent mention made, as of God himself, so likewise of his Son, or Word, and also of his Spirit, as being all three that same one Jehovah, or Being in general; or, as we now speak, the same God, which we have therefore sufficient ground to believe from what he hath revealed of himself in the Old Testament.

But as God thus spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, he hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, or Word, by whom he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 1—3, hath more fully explained this great truth, and set it in as clear a light as our weak eyes can bear; and the words which I have now read, as they are in the original, will serve as a key, to let us into the right understanding of whatsoever he hath said concerning it, at least in respect of the Father and himself, and, by consequence, of the Holy Spirit too; for here he saith, "I and my Father are one."

Where we may first observe, that he plainly distinguisheth himself from the Father, speaking of himself and the Father, not as one and the same person, (according to the sabellian heresy,) under several names, but as really distinct from one

another: "I and my Father;" and, "I and my Father are," in the plural number. And this is his constant way of speaking all over the gospel. As when he speaks of himself with relation to God, he calls him the Father; so when he speaks of the Father with relation to himself, he calls himself the Son, and so distinguisheth himself from the Father. And that we may the better understand both the distinction and relation there is between the Father and him, he often tells us, that he was sent by the Father, John v. 37; viii. 16; xii. 49, &c.; that he came in the name of the Father, John v. 43; that he was sealed and sanctified by the Father, John vi. 27; x. 36; that he spake as the Father said to him, John xii. 50; as the Father taught him, John viii. 28; and what he had heard of the Father, John xv. 15; that he sought not his own will, but the will of the Father, John v. 30; that he did the works of his Father, John x. 37; that he did his works in the name of the Father, John x. 25; that he liveth by the Father, John vi. 57; and, "as the Father," saith he, "hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," John v. 26. By which, and such like expressions, which often occur, he gives us plainly to understand, that he received his doctrine, his works, his power, and his very life from the Father; that life which he hath in himself, as the Father hath it in himself; which being the Divine nature or essence itself, (for none hath life in himself but God,) he is therefore properly God of God, and so another or distinct person from the Father, but still the same God with him.

And that is the other thing to be observed here, "I and my Father are one;" which cannot be so well understood in English, as in the original Greek,

where it is not $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ in the masculine gender, as if they were one person, but in the neuter $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, one thing, one being. And so St. John speaks of all the three Divine Persons, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; these three Persons are one thing, 1 John v. 7. This is that which God himself asserts of himself in the Old Testament also, and so gives us the most infallible exposition of this phrase in the New, where he saith in Moses, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Jehovah," Deut. vi. 4; that is, as I observed before, one being, one essence, or, as the Greeks express it, $\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha\ \acute{o}\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$. From whence, the council of Nice rightly declared, both from the doctrine of the apostolic and primitive church before that time, and also from the holy Scriptures themselves, that the Son of God is $\acute{o}\mu\omicron\upsilon\sigma\acute{o}\upsilon\sigma\iota\omicron\varsigma$, of the same essence with the Father, which is perfectly the same in greek that יהוה אחד is in hebrew. And therefore, the arians of old, as well as the socinians now, in this as in other things, did but betray their ignorance, when they objected against that word as invented by the said council. For, besides that it had been used in the church all along before, it was taken out of God's own word, and is nothing but a greek translation of the hebrew text. From whence we may also see, by the way, what good ground the primitive and catholic church had to use the words "*essentia, substantia, subsistentia*," and the like, in discoursing upon the most blessed Trivinity in unity, they being all grounded upon the most proper name of God, and that which he himself useth in speaking of himself, even יהוה, Jehovah, from הוה, to be, or exist, as he himself also explains it, where he saith, "I AM THAT I AM," and simply, "I am," Exod. iii. 14. And after him St. John the evangelist,

says, "From him which is, and which was, and which is to come," Rev. i. 4; that is, from "Jehovah," from the Being which always is. Which is also necessarily implied, or rather expressed, as well as one word could do it, in my text, where the Father and the Son are said to be, "*unum*," which cannot be otherwise understood according to the idiom of that tongue, than of "*unum ens*," one Being, one Jehovah.

This, I confess, is a mystery that is above the reach of human reason to comprehend, as all the Divine perfections are, as well as this. But it is far from being against reason, or a contradiction, as the socinians pretend. For we do not say, that three persons are one person, or that the Father and Son are one person: that, indeed, would look something like a contradiction. But there is not one word in all the holy Scriptures that looks that way. All that they, and we from them, assert, is, that the three Divine Persons are one Jehovah, and that the Father and the Son are one Being, of one and the same essence or nature, one God: which though our reason cannot comprehend, yet it requires us to believe it, because we have his word for it, who is Reason, and Wisdom, and Truth itself; for that this is his meaning in these words, appears, not only from the words themselves, as I have already shown, but from the context too, both before and after.

In the next verse but one before my text, speaking of his sheep, he saith, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hands:" in the next verse he saith, "And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand;" and so makes his hand or power to be the same with the Father's, which is a thing he would

have us take special notice of; and, therefore, takes frequent occasions to acquaint us, that he can do, and always doth, whatsoever the Father doth. Sometimes he tells his disciples, that the Father will send the Holy Ghost, John xiv. 26; sometimes, that he will send him, John xv. 26; xvi. 7. In one place he saith, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," John xvi. 23. In another, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," John xiv. 14. "As the Father," saith he, "raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John v. 21. And accordingly, as he himself is sometimes said to be raised from the dead by God, Acts ii. 24, so he himself saith, that he will raise himself, John ii. 19, by his own power, John x. 18; which could be no other than the power of God, one and the same power that the Father hath; and therefore, he must needs be one and the same God: especially, considering, that as what the one doth, the other doth also; so what is done to the one, is done to the other too. "He that hateth me," saith he, "hateth my Father also," John xv. 23. "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also," John viii. 19. "And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me," John xii. 45. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" John xiv. 9. How could this possibly be, if he and the Father were not one God? And with what face also could he otherwise join himself with the Father? saying, "As we are one," John xvii. 22. "And we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23. What creature durst be

thus bold with God? Who but he who is his Fellow, and equal in all things to the Father? And yet the Son doth not only do this, but in speaking of the Father and himself, he commonly puts himself before the Father, "I and the Father that sent me," John viii. 16. And in my text, "I and my Father are one:" for which, I do not see what show of reason can be given, but that he doth it on purpose to signify to us, that the Father and he are so perfectly one, that there is no priority of the one before the other; nor any difference at all between them, as to their nature: so that it is all one which is named first, they being both one and the same God.

He that reads the gospel, especially of St. John, will meet with many such expressions uttered by our Saviour, which none could utter but God himself; and which he therefore doubtless uttered, that we might believe him to be God. But I mention these here only upon the occasion of our Saviour's saying immediately before my text, that none can pluck his sheep out of his, or out of his Father's hand, and so making his power to be the same with the Father's; which, lest his hearers should wonder at, he shows them the reason why he said so, adding immediately, "I and my Father are one:" one in essence, and therefore one in power; which otherwise could not be. For if he was inferior to, or any way different from his Father in his essence or nature, he must needs be so in his power too. And therefore, the occasion of his saying these words, sufficiently demonstrates that to be his meaning in them.

The same appears also from what follows my text. Our Saviour had no sooner said this, but

the Jews took up stones again to stone him, (as they had done before upon the like occasion, John viii. 59;) upon which "Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? The jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God," John x. 32, 33. From whence it is plain, that the jews, who were perfectly acquainted with the language our Saviour used, and what was commonly meant by the words he spake, when he said, "I and my Father are one," understood his meaning to be, that he was God, "one God with the Father;" and therefore accused him of blasphemy: which they could not have done, if they had not believed that to be the meaning of the words he spake. To avoid the imputation of which horrid crime, our Saviour would certainly have denied that to be his meaning, if it had not been so.

But he is so far from denying that his meaning was, "That he is God, one with the Father;" that he proves he might truly say it without blasphemy, and that he really is so. That he might truly say it, he proves by an argument *à minori ad majus*. "Is it not written," saith he, "in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If ye called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" John x. 34—36. As if he had said, If magistrates, who are only God's vicegerents and ministers, are called gods, as ye know they are in your own law, how can ye accuse me of blasphemy, for calling myself

the Son of God? How truly may I be called by that name, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world? Where we may observe, he doth not say, Whom God, but “whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world;” who therefore was before, otherwise he could not have been sent hither. We may likewise observe here, that whereas he had before said, that he and the Father are one; he here saith, that he had said, “I am the Son of God.” From whence it appears, that, in the language of our Saviour, to be the Son of God, and to be one with the Father, is the same thing, even to be God himself, “the living and true God;” as the jews understood him, not only in this, but in another parallel place, where it is said, “Therefore the jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God,” John v. 18. Because he called himself the Son of God, or said, God was his Father, the jews concluded, that he made himself equal to God. But they could never have raised such an inference from thence, unless it had been the received opinion among them, that none can be truly called the Son of God, but he must needs be equal to God, or of the same nature with him; and, by consequence, that wheresoever Jesus is called the Son of God, as he often is, the meaning, according to the common use of the phrase at that time, was, that he was of the same nature or substance with the Father, and so equal to him.

And that he really is so, he in the next place proves from the works he did; for immediately after the words before spoken of, he saith, “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him," John x. 37, 38. Where we may again observe, first, that what he had before signified, by saying, that he was the Son of God, and one with the Father, and so truly God, as the jews rightly understood him; he expresses the same thing here, by saying, that the Father is in him, and he in the Father, which is the highest and clearest expression that can be, of the unity of their essence, or of their being one and the same God: so that, although their persons be distinct, yet they are reciprocally in one another; which could not be, if their essence was not one and the same in both.

But that which I would chiefly observe here, is, that our Saviour appeals to his works, as an undeniable argument and demonstration of his Divine power and Godhead, that he and the Father are one. "Though ye do not believe me," saith he, "believe the works:" as if he had said, Though ye do not believe me upon my own word, yet believe your own eyes: ye see what I do, such things as none can do but God; which therefore are of themselves sufficient to convince you of the truth of what I said; even, that "I and my Father are one." As he said also to Philip, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake," John xiv. 11. Thus he refers the messengers of John the Baptist to the works he did, as a clear proof that he was the Christ, the Son of God, without his telling them that he was so, Matt. xi. 4, 5; Luke vii. 21, 22. And doth not only assert, that the works he did bare witness of him, John v. 36; x. 25; but that

their testimony was such as made those who did not believe in him, inexcusable before God. "If I had not," said he, "done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen" (my works) "and hated both me, and my Father," John xv. 24. He appearing among them as a mere man, in a mean condition, did not expect they should take his bare word for it, that he was God. But when he had done such works before their eyes, which no mere man ever did, or could do, none but one that is of infinite power; they were now without all excuse that did not believe him to be God, one with the Father, as his works plainly showed him to be.

This, therefore, is that which I shall now, by his assistance, undertake to prove. It is true, we who already believe what he said to be true, having his word for it, need not any other arguments to persuade us of it. Howsoever, for the further confirmation of our faith, and for the greater conviction of those who do not believe in him, it will be of great use to show, that the works which Jesus Christ did, while he was upon earth, do plainly demonstrate him to be the one living and true God, of one and the same nature, glory, power, and all Divine perfections with the Father, who made, and governs the whole world. For which purpose we shall first consider what works he did, and then how he did them.

The works which our Saviour did upon earth, whereby to show forth his Godhead, as they are recorded in the holy gospels, were not only many, but of several sorts and kinds. The most common and ordinary, were his curing diseases and distempers in men's bodies; particularly the leprosy,

Matt. viii. 3 ; Luke xvii. 12—14 ; the palsy, Matt. ix. 2 ; the dropsy, Luke xiv. 2, 3 ; the fever, Matt. viii. 15 ; John iv. 52 ; the issue of blood, Matt. ix. 22 ; the withered hand, Matt. xii. 13 ; the dumb, Matt. ix. 33 ; the deaf, that had also an impediment in his speech, Mark vii. 35 ; the blind, Mark viii. 25 ; x. 52 ; two blind men together, Matt. ix. 30 ; xx. 34 ; and one that was born blind, John ix. 1—7 ; a woman that was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself, Luke xiii. 11—13 ; the man who had his ear cut off, Luke xxii. 51 ; the impotent man that had an infirmity thirty-eight years, John v. 5—9 ; the centurion's servant that was ready to die, Luke vii. 2—10. These are particularly named ; but it is said, that he healed all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people, Matt. iv. 23 ; ix. 35 ; that great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, Matt. xii. 15. So that when great multitudes came to him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, he healed them, Matt. xv. 30 ; xix. 2 ; xxi. 14. And besides those that had bodily distempers, they brought to him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, Matt. viii. 16 ; particularly two in the country of the Gergesenes, Matt. viii. 28 ; the woman of Canaan's daughter, Matt. xv. 22 ; a man's son, Matt. xvii. 18 ; the man in the synagogue, Mark i. 23—26 ; and him that dwelt among the tombs, Mark v. 2—13.

Moreover, he walked on the sea, Matt. xiv. 25 ; John vi. 19 ; he rebuked and stilled the winds and storms there, Matt. viii. 26 ; Mark iv. 39 ; he showed his power over the fishes, in the great draught that was taken, Luke v. 6 ; and in the fish

that brought money to pay his tribute, Matt. xvii. 27; he fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, Matt. xiv. 19—21; John vi. 9—12; and four thousand with seven loaves and a few little fishes, Matt. xv. 36—38. He turned water into wine, John ii. 7—10; he caused the fig-tree to wither away, with his word, Matt. xxi. 19; and raised three dead persons to life again: the ruler's daughter, Matt. ix. 18—25; Mark v. 35—43; the widow's son at Nain, Luke vii. 12—15; and Lazarus, John xi. 43, 44.

To all of which, we may add, that he did not only foretel many things to come, but he searched into men's hearts, and could tell them what they thought, Matt. ix. 4: he knew all men, and what was in them, John ii. 24, 25; he knew all things, John xvi. 30; xxi. 17. He told what Nathanael was in his heart, and where he had been before he came to him, John i. 47—50. He told the woman of Samaria all things that ever she did, John iv. 29, 39. He told his disciples that Lazarus was dead, before any one had told him so, John xi. 14. He told them where there was an ass tied, and the owner willingly let them take her away, only upon their saying "The Lord hath need of her," Matt. xxi. 2, 3. He told them where they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, and what kind of room he would show them, where he might eat the pass-over with them, Luke xxii. 10, 11. And when he called his apostles, he only said to them, "Follow me;" and they immediately left all, and followed him, Matt. iv. 19, 20; ix. 9; Luke v. 27, 28.

Besides these that are particularly recorded, "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose

that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," as an eye-witness saith, John xxi. 25. "But these are written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," John xx. 31.

And these certainly are, in all reason, sufficient to convince any man of it; for none could do so many, and such miracles as these, but the eternal Son of God himself, of the same essence and power with the Father, the Creator and Governor of all things. As for the number, they were more than any one, or all the prophets had done before. Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, are recorded to have done most, but all theirs put together were not so many as he did in three years and a little more; much less were they like to his, or any way comparable to them. Many of theirs were works of judgment, his were all works of mercy and goodness; all for the good and benefit of mankind, not so much as one to the prejudice of any. We do not read of any distemper, except Naaman's leprosy, cured by the prophets; but there was no sort of distemper but what he cured. None of the prophets ever cast out devils, but no devil could stand before Christ; not a whole legion of them together, Mark v. 9; whereby he showed his power over hell itself, which none ever had but God. The like power he showed also over the water, by turning it into wine, by walking upon it, and disposing of the fishes in it, as he pleased: over the air, by laying the winds and storms: over the fruit of the earth, by making five barley-loaves satisfy above five thousand people: over the plants and trees, by causing the fig-tree to wither: over men's bodies, by healing all diseases they were subject to: over men's wills, by inclining the apostles

to come at his call, and the owner of the ass to send her to him, upon his sending for her : to which we may also add, the people's going out of the temple, upon his driving, without any civil authority, Matt. xxi. 12. And he showed his power over death itself, by raising the dead to life. Indeed, he plainly showed, that he had both perfect knowledge of, and absolute power over all things that are: nothing came amiss to him, nothing was too hard for him; nor one thing harder than another; all things were alike easy to him; he cured the man that was born blind, as easily as if he had been but newly made so. But as the man himself said, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind," John ix. 32. No mere man ever did, or could do it; none but Almighty God himself: but Christ did it, and by that and all his other works demonstrated himself to be Almighty; that he could do whatsoever he would; which is the great prerogative of God, incommunicable to any creature. Wherefore, as the Samaritans believed in him because he had told the woman all that she ever did, John iv. 39; and the disciples, because he knew all things, John xvi. 30; how much more cause have we to believe him to be the Almighty God, the great Creator and Governor of the world, seeing he did not only know all things, but could do all things, and alter the course of nature whensoever he pleased! And therefore, upon that account, he might well say, "Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him;" or, as it is in my text, "That I and my Father are one."

Especially, if we consider withal his way and manner of doing these works. When Moses and

the prophets undertook anything extraordinary, being conscious to themselves that they could not do it of themselves, they prayed to God to do it. But our blessed Saviour, although, as being God of God, he sometimes calls God his God ; yet we never find that he prayed to God at all, as such, but only to the Father. For where it is said, according to our translation, that he “ continued all night in prayer to God,” Luke vi. 12 : in the original it is, in an oratory of God, in a place set apart for prayer. But wheresoever we read that he prayed, we still find that he directed himself to the Father ; as, “ I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,” Matt. xi. 25. “ Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me,” John xi. 41. “ Father, save me from this hour,” John xii. 27. “ Father, glorify thy name,” John xii. 28. “ Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me,” Luke xxii. 42. “ Father, forgive them,” Luke xxiii. 34. “ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” Luke xxiii. 46. Which last words David directed unto God, Psa. xxxi. 5 ; but Christ to the Father ; which, doubtless, was done on purpose, to show the difference between his and others praying : and that although, as he was man, he might pray to God ; yet being himself also God, he prayed only to the Father, from whom he received his essence, and all he had. And for the same reason, he never promiseth his disciples that he will pray to God, but that he will pray to the Father for them, John xiv. 16 ; xvi. 26 ; and so he accordingly doth all along in that solemn prayer, John xvii.

But whensoever he undertook any great work, we never find that he prayed to the Father to do it, or to assist him in it ; but he always did it himself, by

his own power. He cast out devils by the Spirit, or the finger of God, Matt. xii. 28 ; Luke xi. 20 ; that is, by his own Spirit, with his own finger ; for he cast out the spirits with his word, Matt. viii. 16. He only said to the devil, "I charge thee, come out of him," and he immediately did so, Mark ix. 25. Thus he raised the young man that was dead, by saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," Luke vii. 14 ; and Jairus's daughter, saying, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise," Mark v. 41. Where, by saying, "I charge thee," and "I say unto thee," he plainly showed that he did it himself, by the power of his own word. Thus he made five loaves and two fishes satisfy five thousand people ; he only looked up to heaven, and blessed, and his word did the work, Mark vi. 41. Thus he caused the fig-tree to wither ; he only recalled the word whereby it was at first made to increase and fructify, by saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away," Matt. xxi. 19. Thus he restored the withered hand ; he only said to the man, "Stretch forth thine hand, and it was restored whole, like as the other," Matt. xii. 13. Thus he rebuked the winds and storms at sea, and they obeyed him. He only said to the sea, "Peace, be still," and all was hushed ; "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm," Mark iv. 39. Thus he cured the man that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech ; he only touched his ears and tongue, saying, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened : and straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain," Mark vii. 34. Thus he raised Lazarus ; he only said, "Lazarus, come forth : and he that was dead came forth," John xi. 43, 44. Thus indeed he did all

his works; and therefore I shall instance in no more particulars, but that which gives light to all the rest; when he cured the leper, by saying, "I will; be thou clean," Matt. viii. 3. For this shows that he could do what he would, only by willing it to be done, and so was truly omnipotent; this being the way whereby God useth to manifest and exert his omnipotence, in doing what he will, only signifying by his word that he will have it so. Thus it was that he made all things at first. He only said, "Let there be light: and there was light," Gen. i. 3. So all his works were thus made. And seeing Jesus Christ wrought his works after the same manner, he thereby demonstrated himself to be God; the same Almighty God that made the world, as plainly as it was possible to be done.

But here I must not omit, that two of his works may seem to be done another way; yet I must observe withal, that they were done so on purpose, that we might take the more notice of his Divine power in them. One was his curing the man that was born blind: for it is said, that Jesus "spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said, Go wash," John ix. 6. Here he used some means, but they were such as could never of themselves effect the end, but rather the contrary, as being more likely to put out the man's eyes than to make him see. But why then did he use them? I doubt not but there was something wanting in this man's eyes from the first; either some of the tunicles or humours, or the optic nerves; or something else that was necessary to make them fit organs for the sense of seeing; which our Saviour knowing, and not being willing to create anything anew, he

supplied what was so wanting, as he made man out of the dust of the ground. He took of the dust of the earth, and mingling it with the spittle, he anointed it upon the outside of the man's eyes, and by his almighty word he turned so much of it as was necessary into the substance of that which was wanting, and ordered it into its proper place or places : and then he only bade the man wash the rest off in the pool of Siloam, and he saw perfectly. Which was certainly as great an instance of his Divine power as the formation of Adam out of the dust of the ground was.

The other is much of the same nature, his curing a man that could once see, but was made blind by some distemper or accident, Mark viii. 23. He spat on the man's eyes, for the same reason, doubtless, that he anointed the other's with the clay, because there was something wanting. But here nothing seems to be wanting but one or more of the three humours, which the spittle, being turned by his word into such humours, might be sufficient to supply. When he had thus spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked the man if he saw aught? Not but that he himself knew, but that the people might know from the man himself, how he now saw ; who, looking up, said, "I see men as trees, walking," Mark viii. 24. He could see already ; but everything was represented to his sight in an inverted order, upside down ; men seemed to walk upon their heads, with their legs, or lower parts, upwards, like branches of trees. From whence we may infer, that our Lord had now put all things into the man's eyes that should be there ; but they were not yet in their right place and order, to show that he could order everything as he

did in the creation, when and how he pleased. And if he had pleased, the man's eyes should have always continued so disordered, that everything should have appeared to him in a posture just contrary to that it was really in. But when our Lord had thus sufficiently manifested that he could do what he would, he only put his hands again upon the man's eyes, and then he saw every man clearly, Mark viii. 25. All which could never have been done by any other power than that by which the world was at first made.

To these things we might further add, that as our Lord thus cured some by his touching them ; so he cured others by their touching him. For "as many as touched him were made perfectly whole," Matt. xiv. 36 ; Mark vi. 56 ; Matt. ix. 21, 22. And some he cured that were at a great distance from him ; as the centurion's servant, Matt. viii. 13 ; and the nobleman's son, John iv. 50, 51 ; whereby he plainly discovered that, though the body he had assumed was only in one place, yet his Divine essence and power were everywhere, reaching those which were far off, as well as those which stood just by his body and touched it. And, by consequence, that he was both omnipotent and omnipresent too, which none but God ever was, or can be. And therefore he that was so, must needs be the living and true God.

But that which is most of all to be observed in this case is, that, although he saith that he did his works in his Father's name, John x. 25 ; that all the glory of them might ultimately redound to him from whom he received that Divine power by which he did them ; yet it is never said that he did anything in the name of God, but in his own, to

convince us that he had that power inherent in himself and so was the same God with the Father. For all his commands, and threats, and promises, (such as none could perform but God,) run in his own name. He never saith, as Moses and the prophets did, "Thus saith the Lord;" but, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." So he did all his works too in his own name, ascribing the glory of them to himself, which he could never have done, if he had not been that Almighty God by whom they were wrought. Neither did he only act in his own name himself, but he sent forth and empowered his disciples to do so too; and they accordingly did it. For when they came to him again, they said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," Luke x. 17; yea, one that did not follow him, yet could cast out devils in his name, Mark ix. 38. And he himself saith, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," Mark xvi. 17, 18. And, accordingly, St. Peter cured the lame man by saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk," Acts iii. 6. And St. Paul cast the devil out of the damsel, by saying to the Spirit, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her," Acts xvi. 18. But certainly Christ would never have required his disciples to act in his name, neither could they have performed such wonderful works by it, if his name had not been the same with the name of God, or if he had not been one (as he saith in my text) with the Father.

There are many other arguments which God hath laid before us in his holy word, to confirm us in the belief of this great truth; more, I think, than for any other article of our christian faith. But I have here confined myself to that which he himself refers us to in this place, drawn from the works he did; which I am confident no man can duly lay together, and consider without prejudice, as I have now endeavoured to do, but he must confess that Jesus Christ, who did them, was not a mere man, or any other finite creature; but that he was, and is, the one infinite, eternal, Almighty God, of the same wisdom, power, glory, and essence with the Father, the great Creator and Governor of the whole world. For I do not see how it was possible for the most high God to discover himself and his Divine perfections to mankind, and so to demonstrate himself to be God, more plainly than Jesus Christ hath done it by the works he wrought, and which he wrought for that very purpose, that we might never doubt, but firmly believe what he here asserts of himself, saying, "I and my Father are one."

But all the while he did these works, he appeared to be a man, and really was so. It is true, the Word was then made flesh, and dwelt among us; but he was still the Word, the eternal Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father; so begotten of him as to be one with him, one Jehovah, the Lord; who having, from the beginning of the world, made by him, undertaken the redemption of fallen man, though heaven and earth be full of his glory, yet he was pleased to make himself previously known in a peculiar manner to men, such as were able to bear it; and so to manifest himself, and signify his pleasure to them in their own language. This he did for

many ages together, in and by his holy angels. Thus he spake to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses in the bush. For though he that appeared is said to be an angel, he that spake in and by the angel is called Jehovah; who also wrought many signs and wonders by Moses, in Egypt and the wilderness, for his people; and that great deliverance, which was a type and figure of that which he designed for all mankind.

And as sometimes before, so especially after this, he usually spake to his people by holy men, which he possessed with his Spirit of prophecy: for that it was his Spirit that was in the prophets, we are infallibly assured by his apostle, 1 Peter i. 11. And therefore, not only what they said, but all the wonderful works which are recorded of them, were really done by him, and his Spirit in them. Thus he continued to speak and act in and by other men for many ages together. But when the fulness of time was come, he assumed a body of his own: for by the mighty operation of his Holy Spirit overshadowing the blessed virgin, he formed a body endowed with a reasonable soul out of her flesh (as he formed the first man out of the dust of the earth.) This he took unto himself as his own proper body; he fixed his Divine majesty and presence in it for ever, and possessed it in such an intimate, mysterious, and Divine manner, that he thereby took upon him the form of a servant; he became a real and perfect man, consisting of a reasonable soul and body, as other men do, and so was of the same nature in general that all men are of. But this his human nature having never subsisted out of his Divine person, but being taken into it at its first formation or conception in the womb; it could not make

a person of itself distinct from that into which it was taken. And therefore, although he was now man as well as God, yet as both God and man he was still but one person, one Christ; who being thus found in fashion as a man, he, as such, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; upon which he offered up the body which he had thus assumed, as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. But before he did that, he in his said body conversed for some years together among men, and did those many Divine works we have spoken of, before their eyes, that they and all the world might see and believe that, notwithstanding his outward appearance among them as a man, he was indeed the one living and true God, or as he himself here saith, that "I and my Father are one."

Now, from what ye have heard upon this divine argument, ye may observe, first, how necessary it is for all men to believe that Jesus Christ is God, seeing he was pleased to work so many miracles on purpose that we might believe it. It is indeed the foundation of our whole religion; and all our hopes of pardon and salvation in it, depend not only upon the truth itself, but likewise upon our believing it. And therefore, as ever ye desire to be saved, have a care of doubting it, and of those whom the devil employs to make you do so. To me it seems a great mystery, far greater than any they deny, that there should be any such among us, who profess to believe the gospel, and yet will not believe that which is so plainly revealed in it. But our Saviour himself hath given us the plain reason of it, a sad one for them, where he saith a little before my text,

"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep," John x. 26.

From hence we may also observe, what firm ground we have to trust in Christ our Saviour for all things necessary to our salvation, seeing he is one with the Father, the almighty and eternal God. For what cannot he do for us, who can do all things whatsoever he pleaseth? How well then may we say with David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Psa. xxvii. 1. And with St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13.

Moreover, by this we may see what cause our Saviour had to say, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," John v. 23; seeing he and the Father are one: and, by consequence, how much we are all bound to do him all the service and honour that we possibly can, by vindicating his Divine glory from the blasphemies of those who have the impudence to speak against it; by taking all occasions to worship him with reverence and godly fear, by observing all things whatsoever he hath commanded, and by walking in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life; remembering that he himself said, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour," John xii. 26.

From hence, lastly, we may learn, what infinite cause we have to praise and magnify the eternal God our Saviour, seeing he is one with the Father, and yet was most graciously pleased to become man, like unto us; and all to make us like unto himself, partakers of his Divine nature and glory. Let us, therefore, now be glad, and rejoice, and give honour

to him. Let his praises be always in our mouths, that we may be always singing "with angels, arch-angels, and all the company of heaven, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of thy glory; glory be to thee, O Lord, Most High." Amen, Amen.

THE MERITS OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

JOHN i. 29.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!

THIS, before Easter, as it anciently was, so it may be still very properly called, "The great week," because in it we commemorate the great mystery in our religion, the death of Christ; the death which the Son of God suffered for our sins; which is so great, so exceedingly great a mystery, that were we but truly sensible of it, how should we be amazed and confounded at it! How should we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes, that ever we should be the cause that the Son of God should die! That the Son of God should die! methinks the very naming of it is enough to strike us dead, or at least to overwhelm us with so much grief and sorrow, as to wish we had never lived.

But, alas! how far are we from that! We can think and talk of Christ's dying for our sins, and yet live in them: we can hear of his being accused and condemned, and yet not condemn, nor so much as accuse ourselves for them: we can read over the whole history of our Saviour's passion with dry eyes, and be no more troubled at it than as if we had been no way concerned in it. Which certainly can be imputed to nothing else but to the want of a due sense either of the person that suffered for our sins,

or else of the sins for which he suffered. For did we clearly apprehend and firmly believe these things, it would be impossible for us not to be affected with them more than with anything, more than with all things in the world besides. For what are all the sufferings of all the creatures in the world, in comparison of his that made them? But that he who made us should not only suffer, but that he should suffer for us, and for our sins against himself, is so great a wonder, that nothing can pretend to come into competition with it, except it be that we, after all, should not be affected with it.

Wherefore, that we may not in this respect be the greatest prodigies in nature, it will be necessary sometimes to contemplate what our blessed Saviour underwent for us. And it may not be amiss if we do it now: now that we have so fit an opportunity for it, this being the time which the church hath always set apart for that purpose, and this the day which is appointed for public humiliation and prayer over the whole kingdom: for nothing can conduce more to the humbling us thoroughly for our sins, and to the confirming our faith in God, for his granting the blessings we pray for, than duly to consider what his only begotten Son hath suffered, and what he hath thereby merited for us.

Let us, therefore, gather up all our scattered thoughts from all things else, and fix them a while upon the cross of Christ; and then see whether we can forbear to sympathize with him; and whether it be possible to keep our passions from moving according to their respective capacities, in some degree suitably to those he suffered for us. And how happy should I think myself, if I could contribute anything towards so good a work! if I could so

represent Christ's suffering for our sins, that we may all, this day, be truly humbled for them, and for the future both forsake and abhor them !

But this is a happiness which I have little ground to expect ; for the subject is so sublime and great that I can neither fully conceive what I ought to express, nor express what I myself conceive of it. I cannot so much as begin to think of the Son of God, his dying for my sins, but I am presently in amaze, my head turns round, my whole soul is seized with horror and confusion at it. But when I think of venting these my confused thoughts to others, I am still at a greater loss for words wherewith to do it ; insomuch that I should not attempt anything towards it, but that I hope you are all so disposed, as to be ready to receive and improve every little hint and intimation that I shall give you of it, from these words of John the Baptist, who, seeing Jesus coming towards him, cried out, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ! "

In which remarkable saying of the Baptist, every word hath its weight and emphasis ; and therefore, I shall first run through them all, by the way of paraphrase, but very briefly, lest I should be prevented in what, by God's assistance, I principally design.

First, saith he, " Behold ; " see here the person I told you of, the Lamb without spot and blemish, the perfect emblem of innocence and patience ; " the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; " the Lamb typified by that which you sacrifice every morning and evening, and especially by the paschal lamb, which was roasted in such a posture (as Justin Martyr and others observe) that it exactly

represented a person hanging upon a cross. Yea, "Behold the Lamb of God;" a Lamb not of an earthly, but Divine extraction; the Lamb of God's own choosing and appointment; the Lamb of God's own eternal generation, the only begotten of the Father; the Lamb offered up by God himself, unto himself. And so, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away sin;" not that expiates or covers it, but takes it quite away; not that hath or will take it away, but, as St. Chrysostom observes, that doth take it away continually; and that taketh away not only some particular sins, but sin in general, sin as sin: and so, whatsoever there is in sin that either offends God or can hurt us; the strength, as well as the guilt of sin; our inclinations to it, as well as our obligations to punishment for it: and that taketh away the sin, not only of some particular persons, but the sin of the world; the sin not only of Abraham's, but Adam's posterity; the sin of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; for "he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. Thus, whensoever we see Christ, either with the eye of sense or faith, we may cry out with the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

The words being thus explained, it is easy to observe, that they have a peculiar reference to our Saviour's passion, as that whereby he taketh away the sin of the world; and, therefore, I shall look upon them only under that respect, and so take occasion from them to consider what thoughts should come into our minds, and how our affections should be moved at each remembrance of our Saviour's hanging upon the cross, and there dying for our

sins: for which purpose, the main thing required is, to get our minds possessed with as clear a notion and as deep a sense as possibly we can of that death which Christ suffered for us; for when this is once done, we shall soon find in ourselves what influence and effect it will have upon our passions.

Now, in order to the forming in our minds a true idea and conception of our Lord's death and crucifixion, it is no way necessary to use any material or visible representations of it, as they commonly do in the church of Rome, to the great scandal and reproach of the christian religion; but rather, it is necessary that we do not use them. Forasmuch as such sensible objects are apt to keep our minds fixed and terminated upon themselves; and, at the best, they can represent no more than a man's body hanging upon a cross, which contributes nothing towards our apprehending aright the Son of God's dying there for the sins of men, but rather impedes and hinders it. But the best means we can make use of for this purpose, is actually and firmly to believe whatsoever is revealed and recorded concerning our Saviour's passion in his holy gospel, with such a faith as is due to truths attested by God himself; which, as the apostle saith, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. For such a faith causing the things which we believe to subsist thus, not only before our eyes, but in our very hearts, it fills the soul not only with high notions and speculations, but, in a manner, with the very substance of the things themselves.

And there are four things, especially, which we ought thus to believe, concerning the sufferings of the Son of God for our sins; that they were real

and great sufferings ; that they were the sufferings of the Son of God ; that they were for sin in general, and for our sins in particular.

First, therefore, let us recollect what we have all read and heard, and know, and believe, concerning what Jesus Christ once suffered on the cross at Jerusalem, and imagine that we see it now not only represented, but really acted, before our eyes, so as to be able to say, " Behold," yonder, " the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world !" Behold him, after many preliminary affronts and abuses put upon him, haled at length to mount Calvary, the place of his execution ! Behold there an upright piece of timber fixed in the ground, with another little piece jetting out about the middle, and a cross beam towards the top of it ! Behold the body of the blessed Jesus raised up and seated upon the foresaid middle-piece, his feet nailed one over the other towards the bottom, and his hands, one to the one side and the other to the other side of the cross beam ! Behold him hanging in this sad, this ignominious, this painful posture, for three long hours together ! Behold how the blood trickles down out of the orifices which the nails have made in his hands and feet ! How fast doth it fall to the ground, as if all the blood in his body was striving to get out there ! And that which is forced to stay behind, how it doth ferment and boil in his veins and arteries, and swell and stretch them to that height, as to make them ready to burst asunder ! What pain, what torment, is he now in, all over from head to foot ! But what ! Is there nobody to pity and relieve him in this distress ? So far from that, that when his excessive heat hath made him thirsty, behold, the standers by will give him nothing else but

“gall and vinegar to drink:” a sad cordial for a dying man! But will not Almighty God, whom he so truly called Father, will not he come in to rescue or assist him? Alas! there is the source of all his pain and misery; for his Father, who once and again had said in the hearing of men, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;” his Father himself is now so angry and displeased, that he seems utterly to have forsaken him. This is that which racks and tortures his soul infinitely more than all the nails afflict his body; insomuch, that in the midst of all his pain, he is forced to cry out, in a most sad and doleful manner, (methinks I hear it still,) “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And now, behold the Lamb of God roasting in the fire of his Father’s wrath, and offering up himself as a whole burnt-offering to him; until, at length, being no longer able to endure the flames, he “gives up the ghost!”

But then, in the next place, let us consider who it was that underwent all this. Who? No other, no less a person than the eternal Son of God, of the same nature and glory with the Father; for when they crucified him, “they crucified the Lord of glory,” as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. ii. 8. The blood we saw upon his hands and feet, and dropping down so fast from thence unto the ground, “it was the blood of God;” for so the same apostle calls it in the charge he gave to the asiatic bishops, requiring them “to feed the church of God, which he” (God) “hath purchased with his own blood,” Acts xx. 28. Nay, when he died, God himself may be truly said to have laid down his life, for so his own beloved disciple saith expressly, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for

us," 1 John iii. 16. Strange expressions ! yet not so strange as true, as being uttered by Truth itself. Neither will they seem strange unto us, if we truly believe and consider that he who suffered all this was and is both God and man ; not in two distinct persons, as if he was one person as God, and another person as man, according to the nestorian heresy ; for if so, then his sufferings as man would have been of no value for us, nor have stood us in any stead, as being the sufferings only of a finite person : but he is both God and man in one and the same person, as the third general council declared out of the holy Scriptures, and the catholic church always believed. From whence it comes to pass, that although his sufferings affected only the manhood, yet that being at the same time united to the Godhead in one and the same person, they, therefore, were, and may be properly called, the sufferings of God himself ; the person that suffered them being really and truly God.

But why should he who is God himself suffer ? Was it for himself, upon his own account, for his own sin ? No, surely ; " for he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth : " and he who never sinned himself, could never suffer for himself. But why did he then suffer ? The prophet resolves the question, saying, " He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all, " or, as the word signifies, " made all our iniquity meet on him, " Isa. liii. 4—6. And, therefore, his apostles say, " He died for our sins ; he was delivered for our offences ; he was made sin for us ; he gave himself for us ; he laid down his life for us ; he was made a

ransom for all ; he was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world ;" or, as he himself words it, " The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28 ; or, " instead of many," even as many as partake of that nature which he assumed, and in which he suffered.

For, seeing he took not on him any particular human person or persons, but the human nature in general, which had no subsistence out of the Divine Person, hence all that are of that nature were virtually contained in him, the second, as well as they were in the first, Adam : and, therefore, also suffered with him, because their nature did so, in his Divine Person, to which it was united ; by which means he, by the one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. So that whensoever we look upon our Saviour as hanging upon the cross, we may truly say, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !"

Neither is it enough that we thus believe that Christ died for mankind in general ; but, in the last place, every one should believe that Christ died for him, and for his sins in particular ; so as to apply the sufferings of the human nature in Christ to his own particular human person. For, seeing it is expressly said that Christ tasted death for every man, every man ought to believe he did it for him, Heb. ii. 9. And as no man can believe this except he repent, so no man can truly repent of all his sins, but he may and ought to believe this, even that Christ died for him, and for those very sins which he hath repented of. Thus we find St. Paul acting

his faith, so as to appropriate Christ unto himself: "I am crucified," saith he, "with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20.

Thus every one that repents and believes the gospel, should look upon himself as particularly interested in what Christ did and suffered for mankind, as much as if he had done and suffered it only for him; so that I am bound, and so is every one else, not only "to confess with my mouth," but "to believe in my heart," that he became the Son of man, that I might become the son of God: he assumed my human, that I might partake of his Divine nature. He was "delivered for my offences," and "raised again for my justification;" he was "made sin for me," that "I might be made the righteousness of God in him;" he died, that I might live, and was crucified by men, that I might be glorified with God for ever; for "he loved me, and gave himself for me:" and, therefore, now that I remember his death, and see him, methinks, upon the cross, I cannot but cry out, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world in general, and my sins in particular!

Now let us put these things together, that Jesus Christ suffered death, even the death of the cross; that he who suffered that death, was not only man, but God; that he suffered it only that he might thereby expiate and take away the sins which mankind in general, and which we in particular, have committed: and if we rightly believe, and duly consider, these great articles of our christian faith, we need not be told what impressions they will make

upon our minds ; for we ourselves shall soon find it by our own experience. Yet, nevertheless, this being the proper work of the season to raise up and exercise our souls in some measure suitably to the mystery which we now celebrate, I shall endeavour, as plainly as I can, to show how the several passions or affections of our minds should be moved, excited, and stirred up, at the remembrance and consideration of Christ's dying for us ; not doubting but you will excuse my plainness, for his sake of whom I speak, and of whom we can never speak plain enough.

For this purpose, therefore, I shall begin with the passions of anger and hatred : I join them together, because of their near alliance to one another ; anger being nothing, in a manner, but hatred in the act ; hatred nothing but habitual anger. And, doubtless, if ever it be lawful to hate, if ever it be a duty to be angry, it must needs be so when we think of our Saviour's passion, and of those who had a hand in it. Our Saviour's passion ! who is able to think of it without utter hatred and indignation against those who caused it ? What shall we think of Judas who betrayed him ? of the officers who apprehended him ? of the chief priests and elders who accused him ? What shall we think of the rabble who preferred a murderer before him, and cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him ?" What shall we think of Pilate, who pronounced sentence upon him ? And of the soldiers who put a crown of thorns upon his head, who stripped him, who mocked him, who spit upon him, who smote him upon the head, who fastened his blessed hands and feet unto the cross with nails driven through them ? What shall we think, I say, of these ? These certainly are far more odious

to all good christians than we can think them to be. Or rather, with what patience are we able to think of them at all? O generation of vipers! who could ever have imagined that men, created after the image of God, could have had such venom and poison, such rancour and malice, so much of the spirit of the devil in them, as to sell their Redeemer, accuse their Advocate, condemn their Judge, destroy their Saviour, kill him that gave them life, and so do all the mischief they could do to him, who did all the good that could be done for them? If we had them here, how would our hearts rise against them! Which of us could forbear to express the utmost of his hatred and abhorrence of them? How should we all strive to serve them, if it were possible, as bad as they served our Saviour!

But we must not spend all our wrath and fury upon them, but remember that we ourselves had also a great hand in that horrid act. They indeed were the instruments; but the sins of men, and ours among the rest, were the principal causes of it: the consideration whereof is enough, one would think, to make us out of love with sin as long as we live, and to hate it with a perfect hatred, and ourselves also for the commission of it. Which that we may do, let us search into our hearts, review our lives, and bethink ourselves what sins we have committed against the eternal God; and remember these were they which put our Saviour to so much grief and pain, into such an agony, that he sweat drops, great drops of blood. These were they for which he was delivered up into the hands of his malicious enemies, and was so cruelly used and abused by them. These were they which incensed the wrath of God so much, that he himself could no way quench it, but with his

own blood. In short, these were they for which the Son of God himself was betrayed, apprehended, derided, accused, arraigned, condemned, and crucified. Can we remember this, and yet endure ourselves, and our sins too? Surely it is impossible! If there be any such thing as gall in us, it must needs overflow and vent itself against ourselves and sins, when we remember what shame and misery we thereby brought upon the best friend that ever we had, or ever can have, in the whole world. Ungrateful creatures! that ever we should put the Son of God to all this trouble, and bring him with so much grief and sorrow to his grave. That ever we should offend Almighty God so much, that nothing but the blood of his only begotten Son should appease and reconcile him to us.

But what! shall we still live in sin, notwithstanding that our Lord hath died for it, and so crucify to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame! God forbid! No; let us now revenge our Saviour's death upon our sins, which caused it, and kill them as they killed him, even "crucify our flesh with the affections and lusts." Let us now live in a perfect aversion and antipathy to all manner of vice and wickedness, and set ourselves so much against it, that all the world may see our love to Christ, who died for our sins, by our constant hatred of those sins for which he died.

And now we speak of love, that certainly is a passion that must needs be raised to its highest pitch, when we "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." If we behold him only as the Lamb of God, as such he is without spot and blemish; beauty, goodness, purity, glory, perfection itself; and, therefore, infinitely deserves

our love for what he is: but when we behold him as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and so consider not only how lovely he is in himself, but, likewise, how loving he hath been, and still is, to us; I wonder how we are able to love anything in the world besides, or at least in comparison of him. For where shall we find a friend that ever did, or ever can, express so much love and kindness to us as our dear Lord hath done? For what hath he not done? What hath he not suffered for us? He, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," and all for us, Phil. ii. 6—8. And as he himself saith, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John xv. 13. Yet this love had he for us, for "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us," 1 John iii. 16. He did not only suffer hunger, and thirst, and contempt, and grief, and pain, and trouble for us, but he laid down his life for us. Oh, the height, the length, the depth, the breadth of the love of Christ to mankind! That glory itself should be despised, mercy slighted, love hated, innocence accused, justice condemned, life die, God be crucified for men! How can we muse of this, and the fire not kindle in our breasts, and break out into an open flame of divine love to Him, who so loved us as to give himself for us!

And if any of your hearts be not yet inflamed with true love to Christ, bring them nearer to his cross,

behold him there how he hangs upon it; view him well, see how his heart beats, his head hangs down, his hands and feet are all of a gore-blood, and all for you! Consider how his body is racked, his soul is scorched, his whole man is tormented in the fire of God's wrath, and all for you! Look a little longer, and behold what pangs of death are upon him, until at length he bows his head, and gives up the ghost, and all for you! And if after all this, "any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha."

Neither doth our blessed Saviour thus infinitely deserve our love, only by what he once suffered upon the cross, but likewise by what he is still doing for us in heaven; where he appears continually in the presence of God on our behalf, applying the merits of that death to us, which he underwent for us upon earth. For it is to him thus dying, and therefore making intercession for us, that we are obliged for whatsoever we have, or are, or do, that is good; it is he who supplies our wants, that resolves our doubts, that prevents our fears, that removes our troubles, and delivers us from seen or unseen dangers, every day: it is he who restrains the power, abates the pride, assuages the malice, infatuates the counsels, and defeats the designs of all our enemies: it is by him that our vices are subdued, and our hearts cleansed, that our sins are forgiven, and our persons justified; that our prayers are answered, our services accepted, our nature sanctified, and our souls saved: it is all by him, and by him only. He is our Prophet, to instruct and teach us; he is our King, to govern and protect us; he is our High Priest, to make atonement and reconciliation for us. Insomuch, that without him we can do

nothing, but by him there is nothing but we can do ; as the apostle found by experience, saying, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13.

When we are in trouble, and ready to sink under it, it is he who supports our spirits, and carries us with patience and comfort through it. When we are in straits, and know not which way to take, it is he who guides us by his counsel, and directs us by his Holy Spirit, to what is most for his glory and our good. When we are assaulted with temptations, it is he who stands by us, and gives us power to resist and conquer them. When our passions are turbulent and unruly, it is he who reduceth them to order, and brings our minds into frame again. When we are heavy laden with the burden of our sins, it is he who gives rest and quiet to our souls. When we are at our devotions, it is he who assists and perfumes them with the incense of his own merits. And now we are speaking and hearing of him, he is specially present with us, to excite and raise up our affections to himself: we may be confident of it, for we have his own word for it, saying, " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. But is he here in the midst of us? How then can we forbear to address ourselves unto him, and say, Dear Jesus, thou Lamb of God, which takest away the sin of the world, we honour thee. we adore thee, we love thee, for that thou first lovedst us; yea, so lovedst us, as to give thyself for us? What shall we render to thee, most loving Saviour, for this thy infinite love and kindness to us? We know that thou expectest no more, and we can give no less, than to love thee again. This, therefore,

is that which we now promise and resolve to do by thy assistance ; beseeching thee to inspire and inflame our hearts every day more and more with love to thee above all things, by that transcendent love which thou hast, and still art pleased to manifest unto us.

But hark ! what doth our great Lord and Master say, to those who profess to love him ? “ If ye love me,” saith he, “ keep my commandments ;” without which, indeed, we have no ground to think we love him, but have all the reason in the world to fear and dread him. For if, notwithstanding all that he hath done and suffered for us, we shall still continue to break his laws, dishonour his name, and refuse his gospel ; what can we expect, but that he will leave us to the judgment of God, to be punished according as our sins deserve ? And if he underwent so much for those sins which were none of his own, but others, what a fearful thing will it be for us to “ fall into the hands of the living God !” What cause have we then to fear, lest we, by our impenitence and unbelief, should lose the benefit of all Christ’s sufferings, and forfeit our right and title to all the blessings which he hath thereby purchased for us ! For what then will become of us ? If our Saviour himself will not save us, who can ? And yet if we continue in our rebellions against him, instead of saving, he will “ break us with a rod of iron, and dash us into pieces like a potter’s vessel.” He will set himself against us, and be as great an enemy as he hath been a friend to us : he will let loose the Divine vengeance, and our own consciences upon us : he will consign us over to utter darkness, where “ the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” He will pronounce that terrible sentence upon us,—

I dread to repeat it, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Who can think of this, and not tremble at the thoughts of living in those sins, for which the Son of God died?

But as we have so much reason to fear the sad effects of sin, in case we continue in it; so, if we repent and turn from it, we have all the ground imaginable to hope and trust on Christ, for pardon and salvation, and for all things necessary both for life and godliness. For now that the Lamb of God hath taken away the sin of the world, what need we fear? Do we fear shame? He was derided. Do we fear pain? He was tormented. Do we fear judgment? He was condemned. Do we fear death? He was crucified for us. Do we fear any of our fellow-creatures? Our Creator himself has now become our Saviour, and mighty Deliverer; he hath delivered us from great dangers: "he doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us," 2 Cor. i. 10.

And what good thing is there in the whole world, which we may not, which we ought not to hope for now, at the hands of God? For, as the apostle argues, "he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor

things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 32—35, 37—39.

Thus, when we consider how great things Christ hath done for us, we cannot but rejoice in hope, and triumph over despair and diffidence. But if we consider withal how he did it, even by dying for us, and so undergoing all the punishments which were due to our sins; this is enough to make us grieve, lament, and mourn all the days of our life. Insomuch, that I cannot but sometimes wonder with myself, how we are able to lift up our heads, and look one another in the face; that we do not blush, that we are not ashamed of ourselves, for being guilty of such sins, for which no less a sacrifice than the Lamb of God himself could make atonement. Yea, I wonder how we make a shift to live, how we can endure ourselves, and keep our hearts from sinking down within us, when we call to mind what we and our sins have done, even crucified the Lord of glory, and laid his honour in the dust. The remembrance of it cannot surely but be grievous to us, and the burden so intolerable, as to force not only tears from our eyes, but blood from our very hearts; and make us wish that we had never been born, that we had never lived, that so we might never have been any cause that the Son of God should die.

Such passions, or rather compassions as these, do so naturally flow from the due consideration of our Saviour's sufferings, that we need no other arguments to excite or move them. However, to keep up our minds a little longer in this holy and devout exercise, let us suppose ourselves to be standing or passing by the cross, whilst our Saviour was hanging

upon it, and apprehend him crying out, as he justly might, after this or the like manner :

“ Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,” which is done unto me, “ wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger !” Behold and see what your sins have done, what they have done to me, the eternal Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father ! See what scorn and contempt they have brought upon me, what spittle they have thrown in my face, what gashes they have made in my head, what wounds in my hands and feet, what bloody sweat over my whole body ! And yet, alas ! all that you can see is nothing in comparison of what I feel ; I feel the wrath of God, the wrath of my beloved Father, and all that fury and vengeance which is due to your sins ; it all now centres in me. Oh, the fire now kindled in my breast ; enough to burn up ten thousand such as you to nothing ! How doth it flame and spread itself over my whole man ! “ My throat is dry, my heart is faint, my soul is sorrowful unto death.” What a load is now upon me ! What a burden do I now bear ! No less than the sin of the whole world ! A burden so great, so heavy, so grievous to be borne, that I myself should sink under it, but that I am supported by my Almighty power and Godhead. Oh, that you could but look into my breast, that you did but know what pain and anguish, what horror and confusion, I there suffer for your sins ! how would it grieve you to the heart ! And yet all this is not enough neither ; for nothing less than death, than my death, will satisfy my Father for your sins : so that either I must die now, or else you must die for ever. And therefore, behold my love ; rather than you should die eternally, I

myself for your sakes now give up the ghost and die !

Can we possibly apprehend our Lord complaining thus, as he justly might, upon the cross, and not sympathize and condole with him? Blessed Lord ! we cannot ; we cannot but grieve with thee, having been the cause of all this grief unto thee. It cuts us to the heart, to see thy blessed body thus torn and mangled, and to consider how thy innocent soul is oppressed and tormented for our sins, for those sins which we have taken pleasure and delight in. But now thy death and passion bring them all into our minds, and make us possess our former iniquities, which are as a "sore burden too heavy for us to bear." Wherefore we humble ourselves before thee this day, we abhor ourselves, we repent in dust and ashes. "Oh that our heads were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, that we might weep day and night !" That nothing may come so near our hearts, nothing lie so heavy upon our spirits, nothing be so grievous and painful to us, as the remembrance of our having lived so as to cause thee, in whom we live, to die. But shall we do so still? No ; by thy assistance we will grieve our sins to death, and give up our lives to thee, who hast given thine for us.

Such thoughts as these cannot but come into our minds, whensoever, by a quick and lively faith, we behold the Son of God hanging upon the cross for us ; the saddest sight that ever was, or can be seen : so sad, that it would certainly break our hearts, and make us spend our days in nothing else but grief and melancholy, unless we look further, and behold him there as the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world : and so, together with his death

consider also the glorious consequences and effects of it; as that, by it our sins are all expiated, and our obligations to punishment cancelled and made void; by it the whole creation is reconciled to us, and "all things work together for our good;" by it we are restored to the favour of God himself, and made his own children by adoption and grace; by it we have the image of God stamped again upon us, and are made, in our capacities, holy as he is holy; by it we are empowered from above to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world:" and when we go from hence, by it we shall be carried up to heaven, and be made as happy as it is possible for creatures to be, for ever. The due consideration of which cannot but raise up our dejected spirits again, and make us every one sing with the blessed virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." In God my Saviour! this is the ground of all the joy we either have or hope for, that God himself is become our Saviour; that he hath taken away the sins of the world, and ours among the rest: "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8.

And verily, although we neither have nor do, nor can ever expect to see our blessed Saviour with our bodily eyes, till the last day; yet it is a great joy and comfort to us, that as by faith we have seen him upon the cross, where he suffered so much shame and pain for us; so by the same faith we may now behold him yonder in the highest heavens, where he is exalted at the right hand of God, to be both a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins; where he hath all power committed to

him both in heaven and earth; where he reigns as Lord of lords, and King of kings, crowned with glory and honour, infinitely beyond what we are able to conceive, Heb. ii. 9; where he is "set at the right hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" where he hath angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, and all the company of heaven, to wait continually upon him, to minister unto him, to praise and worship him; and where, at this moment, whilst we are speaking and hearing of him, he is interceding and preparing a place for us, that "where he is, there we may be also." This we have from our Lord's own mouth, and therefore may well desire, with St. Paul, "to depart, and to be with Christ," that we may see him who hath been thus infinitely kind and merciful to us; that we may see him face to face, behold the glory which the Father hath given him, enjoy his presence, sing forth his praises, and solace ourselves in his Divine love and goodness for ever.

Thus we see how our several passions of anger, hatred, love, fear, hope, sorrow, joy, desire, and the like, have all abundant matter to work on, and so ought to be interchangeably exercised, whensoever we behold or meditate upon the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" as we do at this time. And now, I hope, we are all rightly prepared and disposed for the great work which remains, ever to adore and praise this Lamb of God, who hath done and suffered, and procured such great and wonderful things for us. Let us therefore now lay aside all earthly thoughts, and with one heart and mind join with the holy evangelist, in saying or

singing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever," Rev. i. 5, 6. Or rather, that we may do so high a work the better, let us get above this world, and fix our hearts and affections for a while in heaven, where our great Lord and Saviour is; and there let us join in concert with the celestial choir, in those seraphic hymns we find them singing in the Revelation: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And again; "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!" Rev. v. 12, 13.

But not having been accustomed, as yet, to the hymns of the church triumphant, as we hope ere long to be, I fear we may find it something difficult to tune our hearts aright unto them: and therefore let us take that which the church militant here on earth hath always used, and which we ourselves do constantly use in the sacrament of our Lord's supper, ordained on purpose to put us in mind of the great atonement which he, the Lamb of God, hath made for us; and let us, with one heart and voice, join together in that, and say,—

" 'Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.' We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty!

"O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon

us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayers. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God, have mercy upon us.

“For thou only art holy ; thou only art the Lord ; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST'S CROSS.

GALATIANS vi. 14.

BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY, SAVE IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED UNTO ME, AND I UNTO THE WORLD.

WITHOUT controversy, "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," and crucified in it too. What is, if this be not, an inconceivable mystery? That "he who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" that he should "make himself of no reputation;" that he should "take upon him the form of a servant;" that he should "be made in the likeness of men;" that he, "being found in fashion as a man, should humble himself;" that he should become obedient, "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?" This so far exceeds man's understanding, that none could ever have thought it possible, nor so much as have ever thought at all of it, if it had not been revealed. And when it was revealed by God himself, and preached by his apostles, men were generally so far from believing it, that some were scandalized, others laughed at it; "We," saith St. Paul, "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness," 1 Cor. i. 23. The Jews, who expected a temporal Messiah, one that would advance them above all the people upon earth, were mightily offended to hear the apostles say,

that Jesus, whom "they had crucified," was the Messiah or Christ; and the Greeks, who pretended to wisdom and knowledge above all other people, derided them; looking upon all they said about it as proceeding only from their ignorance and folly. This was the general opinion both of Jews and Gentiles, concerning the cross of Christ: but what saith the apostle, by the inspiration and direction of Almighty God? "The preaching of the cross," saith he, "is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God," 1 Cor. i. 18. It is foolishness only to those that perish; and who, therefore, perish, because they reckon the only way whereby they can be saved, foolishness: but to those who are called and saved, it appears to be, as it really is, "the wisdom of God, and the power of God," 1 Cor. i. 24. And, therefore, the same apostle, by the same authority, saith, in another place, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the jew first, and also to the Greek," Rom. i. 16. It is the only means of salvation, without which no man ever was or can be saved; and it is so powerful a means, that every one that believeth, whosoever he be, may be thereby saved. And, therefore, how much soever other people might despise or vilify the cross of Christ, he was not ashamed to preach it; yea, he was so far from being ashamed, that he gloried in it: for, having told the Galatians, that they who should constrain them to be circumcised, did it only "lest they themselves should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;" and that they might "glory in their flesh," being circumcised as they were, so bringing them over to their opinion and party; he takes occasion

from thence to break forth into this pathological, divine expression, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom," or whereby, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"

I say "by whom," or "whereby," for the words, in the original, may be referred either to Christ or the cross; and, accordingly, our translation retains both senses, one in the text, the other in the margin; but both amount to the same thing: for what the cross doth, it doth it only by the power of Christ, as crucified upon it; and what Christ doth in this great work, he doth it by virtue of his cross, or that death which he there suffered; and which, therefore, is to be always understood by the cross of Christ; not the cross simply or abstractedly in itself, but as it was the cross upon which Christ died for the sins of the world, and so denotes the death which he suffered upon it. And if we may distinguish between Christ and his cross, in this case, his cross may seem more particularly related to, from the apostle's saying, that the "world was thereby crucified to him, and he to the world."

But that which is chiefly to be here observed, is, that the apostle, when inspired, acted and governed wholly by the Spirit of God, looked upon all things in the world as nothing in comparison of the cross, or death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore, did not only glory in that, but in nothing in the world besides; yea, he abhorred the thoughts of glorying in anything else, and begged of God he might never do it: "Be it far from me," saith he, or, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." From whence we may learn, that all who are sanctified and led by the

Spirit of God, as he was, set that value upon the cross of Christ, that they not only glory in it, but they glory in it only. Though they do not worship it, as the ignorant papists do, yet they glory in it; and that too not only above all things else, but so as to glory in nothing at all else. And so we must too, if we desire to be like them; which, therefore, that we may, I shall first show, that we have no reason to glory in anything without this; and then, what infinite cause we have to "glory," as the apostle did, "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As for the first, we see how all men are naturally apt to glory in something or other which they have or do; that is, they value themselves upon it, they applaud themselves for it, they boast of it to others, or, at least, pride and please themselves with the thoughts of it, conceiting themselves to be some way or other better for it. Neither is there anything upon earth, but some or others thus glory in it: but the most common things, and to which all others may be referred, are those specified by the prophet; saying, in the name of God, "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth," Jer. ix. 23, 24. Where we see there are three things wherein Almighty God requires us not to glory, and only one wherein he would have us do it: the three, which contain, in a manner, all that is in this world, are wisdom, power, and riches, which they who have are very apt to glory in: and, at first sight, they may seem to have cause to do so,

seeing they are such things as men generally set a great value upon; and they who are possessed of them, being but few, in comparison of those who are not, they may seem to be thereby distinguished from, and advanced above, the common sort of mankind; and, therefore, may be thought to have reason enough to glory in them: but whatsoever men may do, God doth not think so, but expressly commands the contrary. And if men would but impartially consult their own reason, they would find nothing in such things to glory, but all the reason in the world to obey God, in not glorying in them; for what is the wisdom of this world, but folly? What is the strength, but weakness? What are the riches, but poverty and want in the eyes of Him to whom all things "are naked and open?" As he hath sufficiently demonstrated, in preferring those who have them not, before those who have them, and confounding those who have them by those who have them not: "For," as his apostle saith, "ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" (or rich) "are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence," 1 Cor. i. 26—29. All which words I have produced at length, because they may serve as a comment upon those of the prophet before quoted, showing us what little reason men have to glory in wisdom, or strength, or riches; or rather, what great reason they have not to glory

in them, according as is there commanded. And that the apostle in this had an eye to that place of the prophet, appears from his appealing to it immediately after the words above recited, saying, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. For this being written in the said place, it is plain that the apostle had respect to it, and hath given us also the true meaning of what God there commands us to glory in, saying, "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, and judgment, and righteousness, in the earth:" even that this is to be understood of God our Saviour, who is "made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and who, therefore, exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: "for the law was given by Moses, but" loving-kindness, or "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John i. 17. And it came by him, by virtue of the death which he suffered upon the cross, which, therefore, is the same thing in effect that we are there commanded to glory in: for we had never known the Lord, nor that he exerciseth those Divine perfections, but by means of the cross, upon which he died, and by virtue whereof he still continues to exercise them in the earth. So that all our glorying must still be resolved, at last, into the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, therefore, when the apostle speaks of his glorying in other things, as, "I will rather glory in my infirmities," 2 Cor. xii. 9; "It is better for me to die, than that any man should make my glory-

ing void," 1 Cor. ix. 15; "This is our" glorying, or "rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience," 2 Cor. i. 12; in these and such like places, St. Jerome rightly observes, that "all such glory having a relation to the cross, is the glory of the cross; and whatever is worthily performed in any virtue, is done by reason of our Lord's passion," Hier. in Gal. vi. 14. For it is only by virtue of that that we can do anything that is good and acceptable unto God, or receive any grace and power to do it. And therefore, when you begin to glory in anything else, your mouths will soon be stopped, if ye do but remember what the apostle saith, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. To which we may add, How couldst thou have received it, but for the cross and passion of the Lord Christ? And therefore, what hast thou in the world but that to glory in?

And if we have no cause to glory in our virtues or good works, how much less in the things of this world! They are the proper objects of our contempt and scorn, not of our glorying; in that of themselves they can never do us any good, but are often the occasion of men's eternal ruin and perdition, as might easily be shown; but your own reason and experience may sufficiently convince you, that ye have no cause to glory in such things as those, nor in anything else, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore we shall now consider what cause we have to glory in that, and in that only, as the apostle did.

But that we shall soon see, if we do but cast our eye a little upon the cross, and him that hung upon

it, the eternal Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, of one substance with the Father, "God blessed for ever:" he having taken our flesh upon him, and made it one person with himself, he, in that, was fastened to the cross, with nails drove through his blessed hands and feet: there he hung three long hours together, not for himself, but for us, and for our sins: there "he his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24. There "he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13. There "he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 5, 6. There he "laid down his life for the sheep," John x. 15. There he "gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 6. There "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 26. That was the altar upon which he, our true High Priest, offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world; "who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself," Heb. vii. 27, when he offered up himself upon the cross. There he "tasted death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. There the Lamb of God took away the sin of the world, John i. 29. There he was made a "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. All this our Lord Jesus Christ did upon the cross, this he did there

for us, for us his creatures, for us his servants, for us his enemies, for us vile dust and ashes. What an honour was this for us, that the Almighty God, the Lord of life, should die for us, and that too upon the cross, the most painful, the most ignominious, the only accursed death that any one could die. How can any of us consider this, and not cry out with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Especially if we consider also the great virtues of the cross; I mean the glorious effects and consequences of the death which our Lord Jesus suffered upon it: for he having been "obedient to death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii. 8—11: for "He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body," Eph. i. 22, 23. So that, by virtue of the cross, he is now exalted at the right hand of God, and hath all power committed unto him both in heaven and earth, and all for the good of his church, for the salvation of those who believe in him; which he is there continually carrying on and accomplishing, by virtue of that sacrifice which he offered up for them upon the altar of the cross: for as the high priest under the law first offered his sacrifice, and then with the blood of that went into the most holy place, and there made atonement and reconciliation for the sins of the people, so "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more

perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 11, 12. He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24. For "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 12—14. He having given himself a ransom for them, he is the one Mediator between God and them, 1 Tim. ii. 5. He is their Advocate with the Father, ever living to make intercession and atonement for them, by virtue of the propitiation which he made for their sins upon the cross.

How can we hear this, and not rejoice and be glad, and glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! in that he having "endured the cross, despising the shame, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii. 2: that our Lord is now the "King of kings and Lord of lords?" That he who loved us, so as to give himself upon the cross for us, hath therefore supreme and absolute authority given him over the whole creation, and all for us and our salvation? That by virtue of the sacrifice which he there offered for our sins, he is now making atonement and reconciliation for us? He is now our Mediator and Advocate with the Father, and so acceptable to him, that "whatsoever we shall ask the Father in his name, he will give it us," John xvi. 23. What an honour, what a glory is

this to us, that we sinful mortals upon earth should have such a Saviour, such a Lord, such a Priest, such an Advocate in heaven, and all by virtue of that death which he suffered for us upon the cross! What is all the glory which the men of this world so much boast of, in comparison of this! What is it but shame, reproach, and ignominy! Wherefore "God forbid that I should glory, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

But that we may all do it the more effectually, as we have glanced upon the glory and power which was conferred on him, let us recollect also the blessings and privileges which accrue to us, by virtue of the cross and passion of our ever blessed Saviour; which are so many and so great, that they can no sooner come into our minds, but they will fill our hearts with joy and exultation: so that there will be no room left for glorying in anything besides. Neither shall we ever think that we can glory enough in that, whereby so many glorious benefits were merited, and are daily bestowed upon us.

For, first, hereby our sins are pardoned, being all washed away with the blood that was shed upon the cross; the blood of the Son of God: "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 14. For he having undergone the punishments which were due to our sins, our obligation to undergo them was thereby made void and of none effect, as the apostle observes, saying, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross," Col. ii. 13, 14. There lay a

terrible hand-writing against us, for God himself hath given it under his hand, that "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. But none of us hath continued in all things which are there written, and therefore this hand-writing was against us all; but Christ hath cancelled it, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, that it may never be produced against us; for it is fixed there with the same nails that fastened his hands and feet unto the cross: so that he there "redeemed us from the curse of the law," before mentioned, "being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13. But he hung upon a tree, and so underwent the curse which was written in the law against us; he suffered it in our stead, and therefore hath taken off our obligation to suffer it ourselves. He that doth not rejoice and glory in this, doth not know what true joy or glorying is.

Neither is that all; for he, being "delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. So that our sins are not only pardoned, and the guilt of them taken off, but we are justified, or accounted righteous before God, by means of that death to which he was delivered, and which he therefore suffered upon the cross; which is so great a privilege, that St. Paul justly preferred it before all things he had or could ever have in this world: "Yea, doubtless," saith he, "and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but

that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 8, 9. This is that righteousness of the saints whereby they are distinguished from the rest of mankind, and therefore may well glory in it, and in the cross upon which it was merited for them: for it was there that our Lord Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, or an offering for our sins, for that end and purpose, that "we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.

From hence issues another unspeakable advantage, which we could never have had any other way, than by the cross of Christ; for being thus "justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 1; who is himself our peace, and hath reconciled "us unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," Eph. ii. 14, 16. "For it pleased God that in him should all fulness dwell. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight," Col. i. 19—22. Where we see that our peace and reconciliation to God was made upon the cross of Christ, by the death which he suffered, by the blood which was shed upon it, therefore called, "the blood of the cross."

For by nature we are all "the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3; the wrath of Almighty God our Maker, who is justly offended and displeased with us for not answering his holy end in making us; for he

made us to serve and honour him, by observing those wise and righteous laws which he for that purpose hath set us : whereas we have transgressed his said laws, and acted just contrary to what he hath commanded and designed when he was pleased to make us, to the great dishonour of his holy name ; and therefore are justly under his displeasure, and obnoxious to the direful effects of it, even eternal death itself. But his only begotten Son having, in our nature, and in our stead, suffered death, even the accursed death of the cross ; he, by virtue of that, is the Mediator between God and us, interposing himself, and making up the breach that is between us. For the blood which he then shed, being the blood of a person who is God as well as man, it is of that infinite value, that it did not only satisfy for the dishonour which was cast upon God, by our frustrating his end in making us, but did it with infinite advantage ; forasmuch as his Divine perfections shine forth more clearly, so that he receives infinitely more honour by his Son's being obedient to the death of the cross, than he could have received by the most perfect obedience of all mankind.

As it was of infinite value, so it is likewise of perpetual force and virtue for all those who believe in him, from the beginning to the end of the world, both to restore them to the favour of God, and to keep them always in it. For as the high priest went every year, upon the day of expiation, into the holy of holies, and there made reconciliation or atonement for the sins of God's peculiar people, with the blood of the sacrifice which he had offered : so Christ, the true High Priest, having offered up himself upon the cross for the sins of the world, he, by virtue of the blood which was there shed, not only once a year, or once a day, but

continually appears in the presence of God, making intercession and reconciliation for them: as it is written of him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29; not that took them away once, but that taketh them away, in the present tense; "and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 2. He did not only make propitiation for them upon the cross, but by virtue of that, he is, he continually is the propitiation; so that in him God is reconciled, or become propitious, gracious, kind, and merciful again to us; and so continues, notwithstanding our manifold failures and imperfections, because his Son thus continues to be a propitiation for them; otherwise the best of us would be soon cast out of favour again. But there is no fear of that, if we do but "hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii. 14; living with a firm and constant belief, that the man Christ Jesus is the one Mediator between God and men. So that God never did, nor ever will show any mercy or special favour to any man, but through him: but that he being "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world," hath been all along washing his people from their sins in his own blood: that he is now that "Lamb that sitteth upon the throne at the right hand of God:" that he is there continually propitiating and reconciling his Father to us, and so keeps us always in his special love and favour, under his particular care and protection, and the light of his countenance shining continually upon us; and all by virtue of that ransom which he paid, by the propitiation which he once made upon the cross.

What cause, then, what infinite cause have we to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! For who can express the inestimable benefits which we

receive by the reconciliation which he there made for us ! What can be desired, what can be imagined more or greater, than to have the supreme Governor and Disposer of all things for our Friend ! to have him reconciled to us, and well pleased with us, and always manifesting his special favour and kindness to us ! In his favour is life, and health, and strength, and liberty, and all the good things we are capable of, following directly upon it. By this we are delivered from a thousand dangers, which we ourselves could never have prevented, nor so much as seen : by this we are protected from our spiritual enemy, and from all the temptations and snares that he lays for us : by this all our other enemies are at peace with us, and whatsoever their mind may be, they can have no power to hurt us : by this the holy angels minister unto us, and keep us in all our ways : by this we are sure to have whatsoever we ask in the name of Christ, so far as it is good for us, and no further : by this all the good works which we sincerely endeavour to do, though imperfect in themselves, yet are acceptable to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by this we are preserved from all evil, and have all things working together for our good : by this our very “afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory :” by this we have a kingdom prepared for us in heaven, where we shall perfectly behold and enjoy his love, and live with him, in “whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” All these unspeakable blessings we have, or may have, by the favour of Almighty God, through the merits of that most precious death, which our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to suffer upon the cross. In short, it is

to that we are beholden for all the good things that we either have, or hope for at the hands of God; and therefore; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This is that which crowns all the rest, and therefore is particularly named by the apostle as the first and chief thing of all, for which we glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; even because that by the cross of Christ, or, which is the same, by Christ, as dying upon the cross, "the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world;" that is, by it we partake of the Spirit of God, whereby we are enlightened and quickened with a new and spiritual life, and raised up so far above this world, that all its pomp and glory seem as dead to us, and so we seem to it, being no more concerned about anything in it than as if we were not in it.

First, I say, we thereby partake of God's Holy Spirit, for he is "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Tit. iii. 6; as he is now our Saviour, our Mediator and Advocate with the Father. And therefore, the Holy Ghost was not given in a visible manner till Jesus was glorified, John vii. 39; to show that his coming to his people upon earth depended upon our Lord's exaltation in heaven: "If I go not away," saith he, "the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you," John xvi. 7: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," John xiv. 16. From whence it appears, that all the gifts, and graces, and comforts of the Holy Spirit, which are granted to any of us, are granted only by means

of that intercession which he makes for us in heaven, by virtue of the blood that he shed upon the cross for us.

But through the blood of the cross, the Holy Spirit is shed so abundantly upon all true believers, that they are thereby cleansed, purified, renewed, and sanctified, so as to be made new creatures, a different sort of people from the men of this world: they now belong not to the world, but to Christ; "If any man be in Christ," saith the apostle, "he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. This is that which he here means by "the world being crucified to them, and they unto the world;" as appears from the words immediately following, where the apostle explains that phrase, saying, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;" or, rather, a new creation, whereby a man is taken off from this world, and made a fellow citizen with the saints, whose business and concerns are all in the other world. "They are not of the world," saith our Lord, "even as I am not of the world," John xvii. 16. And seeing they are not of the world, but Christ hath chosen them "out of the world, therefore the world hateth them," John xv. 19. And as the world hateth them, so they do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world, 1 John ii. 15. All which being effected in them by the power of Christ crucified, or through the blood which he shed upon the cross, therefore it is here expressed by "the world's being crucified unto them, and they unto the world."

This, therefore, is that for which we ought, in a more special manner, to glory in the cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and in that only ; because by means of that only, we who “ were dead in trespasses and sins,” upon our repentance and faith in him, “ are quickened with newness of life.” We are taught, and led, and sanctified, and governed by the Spirit of God ; we live continually under his particular care and conduct ; his grace is always sufficient for us, his strength is made perfect in our weakness, the power of Christ resteth upon us ; we are selected and chosen by him out of the world, to be his peculiar people, his flock, his lot, and his inheritance : therefore we “ crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts,” Gal. v. 24. For “ our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin,” Rom. vi. 6 ; but him whose we are, and by whom alone we live : according to that word of his apostle ; “ I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,” Gal. ii. 20. But they who are thus crucified with Christ must needs be crucified to the world ; for they are now gone out, and are no longer of it ; and this sensible world must needs be crucified unto them too, seeing, though they live as yet in the flesh, they live by faith, and not by sense, and therefore are no more affected with anything in this world than with a dead carcase that is fit for nothing but to be thrown into the ground, and trampled on : they live above, their conversations are in heaven, and therefore all things upon earth are nothing to them. There is nothing they can love, nothing they can admire, nothing they glory in, except in Him who loved them, and gave himself to die upon the

cross for them, and by that means brought them into this blessed state; so that every one of them can heartily join with St. Paul in saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

But how few there are in the world that can truly say so! Men generally are so bewitched and enchanted with the things of this life, that they glory in them more than in their Saviour; such were they of whom the apostle speaks, saying, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 18, 19. I need not tell you, there are such among us; you all know it too well, without being told of it, that there are many, to our shame be it spoken, who profess the name of Christ, and yet are so far from glorying in his cross, or giving any glory to him, that "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," Heb. vi. 6. God forbid, that we should be in the number of them, or that we "should glory in anything, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Whilst other people, therefore, please and flatter themselves with the thoughts of what they have got or hope for in this world, let us rejoice and glory, that the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song, and is become our salvation: that he loved us so as to lay down his life upon the cross for us: that he by that one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and for

ours among the rest : that he is therefore now our Advocate with the Father, “ ever living to make intercession for us :” that in him our sins are pardoned, and our Maker reconciled to us : that both our persons and our duties are accepted, through the merits of his death, and our hearts sanctified by the power of his Holy Spirit : that “ the world is thereby crucified unto us, and we unto the world :” that “ we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us :” that by virtue of the blood he shed for us upon the cross, he is now preparing a place in heaven for us ; that when this world, and all things in it, shall be destroyed, we may live with him, glory in him, and give glory to him for evermore :—this is true glorying indeed. God grant that we may all thus glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ !

CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN PREPARATORY TO OURS.

JOHN xiv. 2, 3.

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS; IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. AND IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME AGAIN, AND RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF; THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO.

OUR blessed Saviour having acquainted his disciples that he must now leave them, and observing that they were much concerned and troubled at it, he takes occasion from thence to direct them how to keep their hearts from being too much cast down at the apprehension of that or any other trouble that might befall them in this world; even by exercising their faith on him. "Let not your heart be troubled," said he, "ye believe in God, believe also in me." Whereby he hath plainly discovered two things to us; first, that it is his will and pleasure that his disciples should never suffer their hearts to be ruffled or discomposed at any trouble or affliction they meet with here below, but that they should walk through all the changes and chances of this mortal life with an even frame and temper of mind, equally ready to do or to suffer whatsoever God shall see good to require of them, or lay upon them: "Let not your heart be troubled." And then, secondly, that the most effectual means to do this, is always to live by faith in God, and in him; "Ye believe in God," said he, "believe also in me." As if he had said,

Ye believe in God, ye believe that he made and that he governs the world, and orders and disposes of all things in it according to his own pleasure ; and you trust on him to preserve you from evil, and to supply you with whatever is really good for you. As you thus believe in God, believe also in me : believe that I am the Son of God, and am come into the world on purpose to save sinners ; that I am able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by me ; and therefore, put your whole trust and confidence on me for the pardon of all your sins, for the healing of all your infirmities, for the strengthening you against all temptations, for the making your sincere though imperfect duties acceptable unto God, and so for the bringing you at last to heaven. And do not fear nor doubt in the least but I will do it for you, notwithstanding that I am now to depart for a while from you ; for I am only going home to my Father's house, where I will take as much care of you, as if I was still present with you, if you do but continue to believe in me : and therefore let not your hearts be troubled at my departure from you, nor for anything else that may befall you in this world ; but as ye believe in God, believe also in me, your Saviour and Redeemer. And then he adds, for their greater comfort and encouragement against all the troubles and difficulties they should meet with here below, " In my Father's house are many mansions," &c.

Which words, being uttered by Christ himself, afford so much matter of solid and substantial joy to his disciples, that did we but rightly understand, firmly believe, and duly consider them as we ought, we should never suffer our spirits to sink under any burden that is laid upon us in our journey towards

heaven, but should bear it not only with patience, but with cheerfulness and alacrity of mind, so as to esteem it a blessing, rather than a cross and trouble to us : for which purpose, therefore, I shall first explain them to you in the same order wherein our blessed Lord was pleased to pronounce them, and then show how much a firm belief and due consideration of them will conduce to the end for which our Saviour spake them, even to the keeping our hearts from being troubled.

First, therefore, our Lord saith, " In my Father's house," that is, in heaven, which in holy writ is usually called by such names as signify some certain place where people use to dwell together. Sometimes it is called a kingdom ; as where our Saviour saith, " Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xii. 32 ; and " seek ye first the kingdom of God," Matt. vi. 33. Sometimes it is called a country, as in the epistle to the Hebrews ; " But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly," Heb. xi. 16. Sometimes a city, as in the same place, where it is said, " He hath prepared for them a city : " and elsewhere, " For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come," Heb. xiii. 14. Sometimes it is called the habitation, or house of God, as where Moses enjoins the people to say in their prayers to God, " Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven," Deut. xxvi. 15. And to the same purpose, the prophet Isaiah said, " Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory," Isaiah lxiii. 15. And so in my text, our Saviour calls it his Father's house, which is the same in effect with the house or habitation of God ; but he calls it peculiarly his Father's house, the better

to confirm his disciples in their hopes and expectations from him, by assuring them that he was not to go to any strange place, where he had no relation, interest, or acquaintance, and so could do them no service, but that he was going to his own Father's house, where he was sure to have all the favour that he could desire either for himself or them, as being the only begotten Son of the Master of the house, who once and again had publicly declared the great love and kindness he had for him, saying of him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 17; chap. xvii. 5. And seeing he was now to go to this his Father's house to live with him, and to have his ear upon all occasions, his disciples might be confident that he would be able still to assist and protect them, and to procure as much, or rather much more grace and favour for them, when he was gone from them, than if he had still continued with them; and this seems to be the reason why our blessed Lord calls it in a particular manner his Father's house.

But wherefore is heaven here called the house of God, or of the Father? Many reasons may be alleged for it, some of which I shall touch upon and explain, so that you may understand something of the purity, the pleasantness, and the excellency of that blessed place, at least so much as to make you think it long till you get thither.

First, therefore, it is called God's house, because it is of his making or building, as St. Paul observes, saying, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. And in the epistle to the Hebrews, Abraham's hopes of heaven are expressed

by his looking for "a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God," Heb. xi. 10. And in the Old Testament we often read that the Lord made the heavens, Psa. xcvi. 5; cii. 25; Isaiah xlii. 5; xliv. 24. Yea, it was the first thing he ever made, for, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," Gen. i. 1. First heaven, and then earth, where, as all along in the Old Testament, the hebrew word for heaven is שמים of the dual number, to signify both the material and the immaterial heavens; the place where the sun, moon, and stars move and shine, and likewise the place where the holy angels live, and praise, and enjoy God, which, to distinguish it from the other, is sometimes called the heaven of heavens, 1 Kings viii. 27. And in Nehemiah, the Levites, praying to God, say, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host," Neh. ix. 6. Where, by heaven, he means the sky or firmament; by the heaven of heavens, that high and holy place where the blessed spirits behold the face of God, which as far excels the other heaven as that doth the earth, and yet this, as well as the other, was made by the Lord: it was his wisdom that contrived, and it was his power that raised this stately and most glorious fabric out of nothing; he only spake the word, and immediately the foundation was laid, the superstructure erected, and the whole finished altogether; and therefore David said, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," Psa. xxxiii. 6.

But if God made this house, be sure it is well made, as well as it was possible for it to be, as to all the intents and purposes for which he made it; but

he made it for a place of perfect joy, and bliss, and glory, to the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, where they might live in perfect rest and happiness, the highest that their nature is capable of; and therefore we may be confident, that there is no sort of true and real felicity which pure and perfect spirits can possibly enjoy, but what is there to be had in its highest perfection imaginable; for they live in a house which God himself made on purpose to be a house of pleasure for them, which therefore may well be called his house, as being made wholly and solely by himself.

And besides, as it was God alone who made, it is he alone who upholds, maintains, and preserves this house continually, in the very same state and condition wherein he at first made it, suffering no decay in any part of it, nor anything to come near it that may so much as defile or annoy it, as we read in the Revelation: "There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie," Rev. xxi. 27. Hence it is that there is no sin or wickedness there, for that, by reason of its contrariety to the pure nature of God, is the greatest filth and annoyance in the world; and therefore God always keeps his house perfectly clear and free from all appearance of evil; insomuch that, so soon as ever some of the first inhabitants had sinned, he banished them immediately out of his house, lest it should be defiled, and so made unfit for his pure and holy creatures to dwell in: and ever since that time, there never was, nor ever will be any, no not the least sin imaginable committed there; though there be innumerable inhabitants, there is not the least spot, or blot, or blemish in any one of them; there is no ignorance

nor error, no pride nor ambition, no envy, hatred, or malice to be found ; there is no such thing as schism and faction, nor rebellion, nor sedition, nor riots, nor tumults raised ; there is no swearing, nor lying, nor stealing from one another, no striving or contending about “ mine ” or “ thine,” no brawling or scolding, nor so much as an impertinent or idle word to be heard from any of their mouths, nor vain thought to be seen in any of their hearts ; but as holiness becomes God’s house for ever, all that live there are perfectly holy in all manner of conversation, so as never to offend God, either in thought, word, or action.

Oh, blessed place ! who can but long to be there, where we shall be thus perfectly free from all manner of sin, and, by consequence, from all manner of suffering too ; where, as we shall never offend God, God will never afflict us any more ! No, this house is kept so absolutely clean and sweet, that there is nothing in it that can in the least molest or annoy those that dwell there, but so soon as ever any are admitted into it, God wipes away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, Rev. xxi. 4. So that all the inhabitants of that blessed place live in perpetual rest and felicity ; they are never vexed or disturbed at anything, for there is nothing that can possibly do it, everything falling out just as they would have it : as they have no aches, nor pains, nor distempers about them, so they are never crossed in their designs, never disappointed of their hopes, never interrupted in their business, never surprised by any accident, never lose anything they have, nor want anything they have not : by which means they are never dis-

composed, or out of tune, but always of the same temper, always quiet and at ease, neither feeling nor fearing anything to disturb or trouble them; for they are fully assured that their condition shall never be altered, but they shall always live just as they do. As that the place they live in is kept and maintained by Almighty God himself, it therefore may be truly called his house.

And so it may also, because it is of his furnishing. It is he alone who furnisheth this house with inhabitants, and with all things necessary and convenient for them; as for the inhabitants, he at first filled it with an innumerable company of immaterial or spiritual creatures, called angels, the greatest part whereof have continued there since the beginning of the world to this day, are there now, and will be so to all eternity; but some of them not keeping their first estate, but leaving this their own habitation, "God hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6. And these being thus cast out of heaven, and roving about in these lower regions of the world, they found mankind made in the image of God, and so fitted to live in that holy habitation which they had left; which these apostate angels were so troubled at, that they set upon the first man Adam, in whom the rest were all contained, and so far prevailed upon him, that he, by their instigation, sinned against God, whereby both he himself, and his whole posterity, were so far tainted and polluted, that they became altogether unfit to live in that holy place from which the others fell. Upon which God was pleased of his infinite mercy to set up another Adam, his only begotten Son, who, by his dying in the nature of man, should expiate the sins of mankind, so that

“ whosoever repented and believed in him might be saved ;” by means whereof some men, in all ages since the beginning of the world, at their departure out of this life, have been translated into this heavenly habitation, and so will many be to the end of the world ; insomuch that it is very probable, that there will be as many men saved as there are angels damned, and so this house of God will be as full of inhabitants at last as it was at first : but they must ascribe it wholly to the goodness and mercy of God that they ever came thither, and therefore must acknowledge it to be his house, in that it is so wholly at his disposal, that none but he can ever admit one person into it.

And as it is he alone who furnisheth this house with inhabitants, so it is he alone who furnisheth it with all things necessary and convenient for them, with everything they can possibly have occasion for, or can any way contribute towards their living as safely, as pleasantly, and as happily there as it is possible for creatures to live ; for they have all the accommodations they can think of or desire. They can desire nothing but they immediately have it, or rather they always have whatever they can desire, and so can never desire anything which they have not ; for, indeed, all things in the world are theirs, their proper goods and inheritance, as God himself assures us, saying, “ He that overcometh shall inherit all things,” Rev. xxi. 7. “ He,” that is, every one that overcometh the world, the flesh, and the devil, so as to get to heaven, shall there inherit all things ; all things shall be actually conferred upon him, so that every one shall enjoy all things in the world, as fully as if he were the sole possessor of them, or as if there were no person to enjoy any-

thing in the whole world but only himself. All the true riches, all the real honours, all the solid and substantial pleasure that anything in the whole world can afford them, are continually possessed and enjoyed by all and every one that is in heaven ; by which means they are as happy as it is possible for them to be ; as happy as the whole creation, yea, as happy as the Creator himself can make them. And as they never fret, nor vex, nor grieve, nor fear anything, so they are always full of love, and joy, and peace, and goodness, and all sorts of true felicity, as their souls can hold ; always lively and vigorous, always cheerful and pleasant, always rejoicing and singing, and praising God who of his infinite mercy hath brought them thither, and out of the inexhaustible treasure of his own goodness hath provided so plentifully for them in his own house. And it may well be called his house, seeing all things in it are of his providing, and belong wholly and solely to himself.

Especially, considering that it is the place where he himself is pleased, in a more especial manner, to reside ; there it is that he keeps his court : that is properly his throne, as he himself saith, " Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool," Isa. lxvi. 1. And therefore David, addressing himself to God, saith, " Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens !" Ps. cxxiii. 1. And our blessed Saviour all along in the gospels calls him our Father which is in heaven ; and commands us to direct our prayers to him as residing there, saying, " Our Father which art in heaven ;" not as if he were not everywhere else too, but because it is there that he is pleased in a more particular manner to manifest himself, to unveil his perfections, and to

shine forth in all his glory; insomuch, that this place hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for "the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," Rev. xxi. 23; xxii. 5. And indeed, this is that which gives the greatest lustre, the highest perfection to the happiness of those who live there, that they always see God face to face, behold his glory, and enjoy his presence; and have the light of his countenance shining continually upon them, and influencing them so, that their whole souls seem nothing else but flames of love and joy, arising from the full sight of God, and the clear apprehension of his special favour and goodness towards them; whereby they themselves also will be so enlightened as to "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever," Dan. xii. 3. Yea, our Saviour himself tells us, that "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father," Matt. xiii. 43. But what, do I mean to attempt anything towards the description of that place, "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive it?" It is sufficient to our present purpose, that God himself dwells there, and upon that account our blessed Saviour might truly call it, as he doth in my text, "My Father's house."

In which, he saith, there "are many mansions;" which words are not to be so understood as if there were several distinct rooms or apartments in heaven, where every one might live by himself as in his own proper cell; for here they all live in common, and the whole house, with all things in it, is common to all and every one that is admitted into it; every one enjoying it as much as if there were none to enjoy it but himself, as I observed before.

But what then does our Saviour mean by saying, "In my Father's house are many mansions?"

His meaning in short is, that heaven is a very large capacious place, able to receive and entertain a great many people. The apostles were very much grieved to hear that their Master was to leave them, although it was in order to his going to heaven, as not well knowing as yet whether they could follow him thither, or whether there was room enough for him and them too, as considering that he would have a vast train of holy angels about him, which might fill up the whole place; but our Lord bids them be of good cheer, assuring them that his Father's house, whither he was going, is a place of very great reception: there are "many mansions" in it; abundance of room, enough for them and many more, even for all that should ever believe in him.

And indeed heaven must needs be a very large place, that can hold such a multitude of inhabitants who are already in it. The holy angels, the ancient inhabitants of the place, who have lived there ever since it was first founded, are doubtless very many; so many, that I question whether they themselves can tell how many they are. Daniel, in a short vision he had of the place, saw there "thousands of thousands ministering unto God, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him," Dan. vii. 10. And St. John, having had the like vision, said, "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand," Rev. v. 11; that is, they were so many, that they exceeded his arithmetic. And as for the children of men, whom Christ had purchased with his own blood to live with him in that holy

place, the same St. John, in another vision, saw an hundred forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel; and after this, said he, "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," Rev. vii. 9. From whence we may observe, by the way, that when our Saviour calls his flock, "a little flock," and saith, that there are but few that find the way of life; he is to be understood only comparatively; that his flock is but little in comparison to the multitude that follow after sin, the world, and the devil; and that there are but few who find the way to life, in comparison of the many who miss of it; which notwithstanding, considered absolutely, and in themselves, are certainly very many; as our Lord himself here intimates, by saying, "In my Father's house are many mansions;" where there were great multitudes, not only of angels, but likewise of saints residing in St. John's time, and many have been going to them ever since, and still are, and ever will be to the end of the world.

And why may not you and I be in the number of them, as well as other people? If we be not, we must even blame ourselves. Be sure there is room enough for us there, as well as for others; for Christ himself hath told us, there are many mansions in his Father's house, on purpose to excite and encourage us to look after it; and if we do but set ourselves in good earnest about it, and apply ourselves to him for it, we cannot possibly fail of coming thither, for he himself hath assured us that he is gone before to prepare a place for us. "If it were not so," said he, "I would have told you:" as if he had said, If

there had not been room enough for you, as well as for me and others, in my Father's house, I would have acquainted you with it, that so your expectations might not be frustrated; for I would not impose upon you, nor flatter you with vain hopes of living with me in the other world, if there were no ground for you to expect it; but you have all the reason in the world to expect it, seeing that I myself assure you there are many mansions in my Father's house, and that I am now going thither on purpose to prepare a place for you.

From whence we may observe, by the way, how careful our blessed Saviour was to conceal nothing from us that might any way conduce either to our salvation or comfort. "If it were not so," said he, "I would have told you:" and so he certainly would have told us many other things, which he hath not, if it had been necessary for us to have known them; and therefore we may conclude, that whatever he hath not told us, it is no matter whether we know it or not. There are a great many nice questions raised in divinity, especially by the schoolmen, which have perplexed the minds of the greatest scholars, and have caused great heats and animosities in the church; but they are generally of such things which our blessed Master never thought good to determine, nor to tell us anything of them, which he would not have failed to have done, if either our future happiness or our present comfort were any way concerned in the knowledge of them; which I therefore observe unto you, that so you may not trouble your heads with any impertinent controversies about our holy religion, which serve only to amuse and distract men's minds, and to divert them from what is substantial and necessary. What Christ hath taught you,

either with his own mouth or by his apostles, that you must believe, and act accordingly, if you expect to be saved by him; but as for other things, let others dispute about them if they please, but do you rest satisfied in your own minds, that if it had been necessary for you to have known them, Christ would have told you of them, as he assures his apostles, saying, "If it were not so, I would have told you."

And then he adds, "I go to prepare a place for you;" he doth not say, I go to make room for you, as if there was not room enough made already; but, "I go to prepare a place for you;" to take care that you, as well as other persons, may have room there. And he repeats it again in the same words, saying immediately, "And if I go and prepare a place for you;"—to show that this is a thing which he would have us take special notice of, and to carry it always in our minds, that it is by him only that we can get to heaven; that it is he, and he alone, that prepares a place for us in his "Father's house;" and therefore it must needs very much behove us rightly to understand his full intent and meaning in these words.

For which purpose, therefore, we must consider, first, that our blessed Saviour having done and suffered all that was necessary for our redemption and salvation upon earth, he was then taken up to heaven, where he hath been ever since, and ever will be, sitting at the right hand of God; that is, he is exalted above all the creatures in the world, and vested with absolute power and dominion over them, as St. Peter informs us, saying, that Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him," 1 Pet. iii. 22. And to the same purpose St. Paul said, that God, having raised

Christ from the dead, "set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but likewise in that which is to come," Eph. i. 20, 21. And elsewhere, that "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," Phil. ii. 9—11. The meaning of all which is, that Christ Jesus was no sooner got to heaven, but he was immediately advanced above all the creatures in the world; that the very angels and archangels themselves were obliged to own him for their Lord, and to do him homage; that all power is committed unto him both in heaven and earth, so that he can do whatever he pleaseth in the whole world; that no creature can resist his will, nor oppose his authority when he sees good to exercise it; that all places are at his disposal, both in the church triumphant in heaven, and in that which is militant here on earth; that he reigns above, as King of kings and Lord of lords, yea, as the Ruler and Governor of the whole creation; that not only angels and men, but the very devils themselves, are subject to him, and can do nothing without his command or leave; that he can pardon or condemn, he can save or destroy, he can take in or shut out of heaven, whom he pleaseth; in short, that he is an absolute Monarch over the whole world, so that we and all things in it are wholly at his command, he may do with us what he will, there is no withstanding of him, no appeal from him, for he is the supreme Judge both

of quick and dead, both of men and angels ; they are all equally subject to him, and shall be all equally judged by him ; for, as he himself said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son : that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," John v. 22, 32.

But what is all this to us ? are we concerned any more than other creatures in Christ's exaltation at the right hand of God ? Yes, certainly, very much ; for he having taken our nature upon him, whatsoever he did or was done to him in that, was wholly for us and upon our account ; he was born for us, as the prophet said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given," Isa. ix. 6. "He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps," 1 Pet. ii. 21. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 4, 5. He was "made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. "He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. And as "he was delivered for our offences," he "was raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. And so when he went to heaven, he went thither on purpose to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24 ; and therefore St. Paul, having said that Christ is exalted far above all principality and power, immediately adds, that God "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body," Eph. i. 22, 23. Where we may observe, that as Christ is made Head, or Governor over all things, he is made so to the church for the sake of his church, that he

may order and dispose of all things for the good of it, and of all the sound members in it; which plainly shows that Christ's advancement to so high a degree of glory and power in heaven is of mighty advantage to us upon earth.

But you will say, perhaps, What doth he there do for us? What! more, doubtless, than we are able to understand: but that we may understand it as fully as we are able in this life, he is represented as being the Advocate with the Father; so St. John calls him, saying, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 1, 2. An advocate, we know, is one that pleads in the behalf of a person accused, showing cause why he ought not to be condemned. Now, saith the apostle, "If any man sin;" that is, if any man hath committed such a sin for which he fears he shall be condemned, let such a one remember that we have an Advocate with the Father, no less a person than his own Son, Jesus Christ the righteous; who, being himself a propitiation for our sins, may well plead that we ought not to be condemned for them, seeing he himself hath borne all the punishment that was due unto them, and so can easily bring us off, and obtain a full discharge and pardon for us.

As it was typified also in the old law; for the high priest once every year, even upon the day of expiation, having killed the goat of the sin-offering, brought some of the blood of it into the holy of holies, and there sprinkling it upon and before the mercy-seat, made thereby an atonement for the whole congregation; and then laid his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, confessing over him all the sins of the

people, and so putting them upon the head of the goat, sent him away into the wilderness never to be heard of more: so Christ, our High Priest, having offered up himself as a sacrifice for our sins, he entered into the holy of all holies, into heaven itself; and there, by virtue of that blood which he shed, makes such an effectual atonement for all our sins, that they are immediately carried away, nobody knows whither, so as never to be heard of any more, as if they had never been committed, Lev. xvi.; Heb. vii. 26—28.

And hence it is, that he is called “a Mediator between God and man,” 1 Tim. ii. 5; one who makes up all differences betwixt us, reconciling God to us, and us to God. And for the same reason, he is said also to make intercession for us; interceding with his Father that he would not be angry with us, nor punish us for our sins, but that he would accept of his sufferings for us, as a full recompence and satisfaction for all the wrongs and injuries that we have done him; which he doth so effectually, that St. Paul challengeth all the world to show any reason why they who believe in Christ, and obey his gospel, should be condemned, saying, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,” Rom. viii. 33, 34. “Who also maketh intercession for us:” there lies the whole stress of the business, that our blessed Saviour, who suffered for our sins upon earth, is now making intercession for us in heaven; for it is by this means that he applies the merits of his death unto us, both for the pardon of our sins, and for the enduing us

with grace and power to forsake them, together with all the other blessings which he hath purchased for us. He intercedes with his Father on our behalf, and prays him to bestow them upon us.

And Christ never prays in vain, but whatsoever he asketh of the Father is always granted. When he was upon earth he could say to his Father, "I know that thou hearest me always," John xi. 42 : how much more, if it were possible, now he is in heaven, and hath actually merited all the good things that he can ever desire for us ! There, certainly, whatsoever he desires, he immediately hath it, as we see in that remarkable promise he made to his disciples, "I will pray the Father," said he, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth," John xiv. 16, 17. This was the greatest thing that he could ever pray for; and yet he was no sooner got to heaven, but the Spirit of God was given to them in a miraculous manner; by which we see, both that he had prayed according to his promise, and that his prayer was heard: and so it always is, by which means he can do what he will for us, for it is but his willing it to be done, and immediately it is so. This indeed is the proper notion of Christ's mediation, or intercession for us; for we must not think that he makes any solemn prayers to his Father, as we do, or at least ought to do. No; whatsoever he would have, he only actually wills it should be so, and immediately it is just so as he would have it; which is the greatest comfort in the world to all that believe in him, and the greatest encouragement for us all to do so; for as we have no ground to mistrust his good-will towards us who so loved us as to give himself for us, we have as little to mistrust his

power who can do what he will for us ; but may well conclude with the apostle, " That he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25.

From hence, therefore, we may easily understand how truly our Lord here said, " I go to prepare a place for you ;" for seeing that when he went from hence, he was carried directly into heaven ; seeing when he came thither he had all power immediately conferred upon him ; and seeing he there exerciseth that power continually for us, in order to his bringing us at last to himself in heaven, he may be properly said to prepare a place for us there, and to go thither for that purpose ; that being the great end of his ascension into heaven, and of his exaltation there, even that he might from thence supply us with whatever is necessary to our following him thither, that we may be actually possessed of that happiness, which he hath bought for us with the price of his own blood ; to which it being absolutely necessary that we repent of our sins, and so have them pardoned, therefore it is said, " Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. Under which is comprehended whatever is required, or can any way contribute to our being saved by him.

For which purpose, therefore, Christ being now, in his human nature, at the right hand of God in heaven, and in his Divine nature always present with us upon earth too, he often puts us in mind of the evil of sin in itself, and of the dismal effects it will have upon us, if we continue it. He stirs up our hatred of it, strengthens our resolutions against

it, and assists our endeavours to forsake and avoid it. He, by the sweet influences of his Holy Spirit, inflames our minds with the love of God, and with sincere desires to serve and please him ; he prevents our falling into temptations, or gives us power to withstand and overcome them ; he sanctifies all occurrences to us, so as to make them work together for our good. He gives us opportunities of exercising our faith, and fear, and trust on God ; our patience, humility, meekness, self-denial, and all other virtues, and assists us in the exercise of them. He affords us the means of grace, and co-operates with them, that so they may be effectual to us ; when we read or hear the word of God, he opens our eyes to see, and our hearts to receive the truth in the love of it ; when we are at our devotions, he assists us in the performance of them, and perfumes them with the incense of his own merits, that God may be well pleased with them ; when we are at the holy sacrament, he stands by us, and feeds us with the spiritual food of his own most blessed body and blood ; when we are in straits, and know not which way to take, he directs us to that which shall be most for our advantage ; when any trouble falls upon us, he either takes it off, or else gives us strength to bear, and grace to make a good use of it. When, by any surprise or indisposition of body, our minds are disordered and out of tune, he composeth and brings them into a right frame again ; when we are about any good work, he is at both ends of it, and in the middle too, assisting us in the doing it, and interceding with his Father to accept of it when it is done. In short, he leads and directs us through the whole course of our lives, till he hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in

light, and then he brings us to it, and gives us the full possession of it. And he who went thither on purpose that he might thus prepare us for heaven, as well as heaven for us, might well say, "I go to prepare a place for you."

And then he adds, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." But what! will he not receive us before that? Yes, certainly, he will receive our souls, as soon as ever they depart out of our bodies, as we may gather from what he himself said to the thief upon the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43. For from hence it is evident, that although the penitent's body was to be laid in the earth, yet his soul was to be carried the very same day he died directly to Christ, in paradise, or heaven, where he then was as God, although his manhood ascended not till some days after. The same appears from St. Paul's "desire to depart, and to be with Christ," Phil. i. 23 : which plainly shows that he firmly believed that he should be with Christ as soon as ever he departed out of this life. But the clearest demonstration of this great truth, and that which puts it beyond all doubt, is taken from St. Stephen, who, being just at the point of death, committed his soul into the hands of Christ, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Acts vii. 59 ; which questionless he would not have done, had he not been fully assured by the Holy Ghost, that Christ would, according to his desire, receive his spirit unto himself, at the same moment that it left his body ; and so doubtless every soul that ever departed out of this life in the true faith of Christ, is now with him in heaven, his holy angels carrying it, as they did Lazarus, directly thither.

But what then doth our Lord mean by his coming again, and receiving us to himself? His meaning in short is, that although he was now to leave this world, and go up to heaven, there to continue many years, preparing a place for us ; yet, at the last day, when the whole number of his elect shall be accomplished, he will come hither again, and then he will receive us altogether, both soul and body, and so our whole man unto himself, that so the same persons who believed in him and served him upon earth, may live with him for evermore in heaven ; as he himself hath promised in the following words, saying, "I will come again and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also."

This he knew would revive and rejoice his disciples' hearts exceedingly, that they should live with him in the other world ; and therefore he is often pleased to put them in mind of it. "If any man serve me," said he, "let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be," John xii. 26. And elsewhere, he said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 21. And that we may be sure to do so, he prays to the Father for it, saying, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," John xvii. 24. Where we may take notice also how he prays or intercedes for us, even by signifying his will to have it so, as I observed before : "Father, I will," said he, "that they also, whom thou hast given me be with me." And what could we ourselves have desired more, nay, what could Christ himself have desired more for us than this, that we may live with him ? For if we live

with him, we shall live with the best friend that we have in the whole world, and whom we love above all things in it; with him who loved us too, and gave himself for us; with him who took all our sins upon himself, and bore all the shame and pain that was due unto us for them; with him who was derided, scoffed at, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, arraigned, condemned, crucified, and all for us; with him who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and the Father; with him who saves us from our enemies, and delivers us out of the hand of all that hate us; with him who gives us all things necessary both for life and godliness, and enables us to make a right use of them; with him who is now interceding and preparing a place for us on purpose that we may live with him in heaven,—in heaven, where he will fashion our vile bodies, that they may be like his glorious body, and make our souls perfect like his own, that so we may be fit to keep him company; where he will always smile upon us, and manifest his special love and kindness to us; where he will shine forth in all his glory before us, and keep our eyes always open to behold it; where he will advance us to the highest degrees of honour that we are capable of, and fill us as full of all true joy and comfort as our souls can hold: in a word, where we shall live with him, our dearest Lord and ever blessed Saviour, not only for some time, but for ever and ever, as his apostle hath taught us, saying, that “we which are alive and remain” at the last day, “shall meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord,” 1 Thess. iv. 17. And then adds, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

And well may he add that, for this certainly is the

greatest comfort that a true christian can ever have, insomuch that it hath prevented me in that which I promised to show in the last place, even that the consideration of these things should keep our hearts from being troubled at anything we meet with here below ; for if we firmly believe and duly consider these words of our blessed Saviour, and what we have now heard upon them, how can we suffer either our heads or our hearts to be troubled about anything upon earth, but only how to get to heaven ? What if we should be deprived of all our temporal enjoyments, what need we be troubled, when we have mansions above ready furnished to our hands with all the good things we can desire ? What if it be difficult to get a place there ? We have an almighty Harbinger gone before to prepare one for us. What if we have ever so many enemies, yea, what if all the men upon earth, and all the devils in hell, should conspire to ruin us ? What need we be troubled at that, when we have a sure Friend in heaven who can abate their pride, assuage their malice, confound their devices, and make them, against their wills, do us good by all they design against us ? What if we have nobody here below that minds or cares what becomes of us ? What need we be troubled at that, when we have an infinitely wise, and powerful, and good, and merciful Saviour above, continually taking care of us, and providing all things necessary for us, and one who can aid and assist us in all conditions, upon all occasions whatsoever ? If we be in want, he can supply us ; if in danger, he can deliver us ; if in pain, he can ease us ; if in disgrace, he can bring us to honour ; if we be accused, he can acquit us ; if sorrowful, he can comfort us ; if weak, he can strengthen us ; if sick, he can heal us ; if dying, he can receive us to

himself ;—can, did I say? yea, and will too, if we do but obey and trust in him as we ought.

Let us not, therefore, trouble our heads any more about anything, but how to serve our great Lord and Master, Christ, by doing all such good works as he hath set us, and putting our whole trust and confidence only on him, both for God's assistance of us in the doing them, and for his acceptance of them when they are done. Let us but constantly do this, and then we may be sure that he will guide, assist, and bless us through the whole course of our lives ; and, at length, bring us to that blessed place which he hath prepared for us in his Father's house, that we may always live with him who liveth and reigneth with the **Father and the Holy Ghost**, world without end.

THE DANGER OF UNBELIEF.

LUKE xii. 46.

AND WILL APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS.

THE two great principles of human actions are hope and fear; no considering man ever undertakes anything of moment, but either out of hope to get something which he thinks may do him good, or else out of fear of some evil which otherwise may fall upon him: and therefore He who made us, and endued us with these principles, the better to keep us within the compass of our duty to him, hath been graciously pleased to promise the best things we can ever hope for, to those who keep his commandments, and to threaten the worst we can ever fear, to those who keep them not, which one would think should do it effectually. And yet we find the contrary by daily experience; for, notwithstanding all God's threatenings and promises, men still go on in a continued course of transgressing his righteous laws: and the reason is, because, although the word of God be the firmest ground in the world whereupon to build our hopes and fears, yet the things which he hath there promised and threatened, how great soever they are in themselves, yet being not so present and visible to us as those we converse with upon earth, men have little or no regard to them, at least in comparison of what more nearly affects their senses. For men generally, and many also who are called christians, live by sense,

and not by faith. They do not really believe that God will do as he hath said ; and therefore are seldom or never moved with the hopes of what he hath promised, or with the fear of anything which he hath threatened ; but with the hopes and fears of such things only as they themselves imagine may be good or evil for them. And their imaginations being so corrupted, as commonly to mistake good for evil, and evil for good, hence it comes to pass that the lives of men are so directly contrary to the laws of God : neither can it be otherwise until they are better persuaded of the truth and certainty of God's word. They can never do what he hath commanded, nor avoid what he hath forbidden, as they ought, until they believe that he himself will do according as he hath there promised and threatened ; whereas, if they believed that, as certainly as they do what they see, or hear, or feel, they could not but act accordingly. So that unbelief is at the bottom of every sin that men are guilty of, and the great cause that so many are thereby ruined and undone for ever, both in that already mentioned, and in many other respects, as I shall endeavour to demonstrate from the words which I have now read, where our Saviour himself calls that eternal ruin and destruction which sinful men are condemned to, the portion of unbelievers.

That we may understand these words aright, it will be necessary to take a short view of the context of our blessed Saviour. Having uttered a divine parable concerning the necessity of men's being always watchful, and ready to give up their accounts to him whenever he shall call for them ; St. Peter asked him, whether he spake that parable to them, his apostles, "or even to all?" Luke xii. 41. To

this question our Lord answers by another parable, touching all, but more particularly the apostles, and their successors in the government and ministry of the church; saying, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath," ver. 42—44. Where we may observe, the greatness of the reward here promised to a faithful and wise steward, nothing less than all that his lord hath: for the lord here spoken of is the Lord of all things that are; and therefore all things that are are here promised: as they are also where the Lord himself saith again, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. All things therefore are here settled upon every one that faithfully serves this great and almighty Lord. "But," on the other side, saith our Saviour, "if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." As the wise servant shall have all things given for his portion, so this foolish servant shall have a portion too, but it must be with the unbelievers; that is, in other terms, the first shall be advanced to heaven, and the other cast down to hell; as the whole design of the parable plainly shows.

This, therefore, is that which I would chiefly observe from these words at present, even that God's

condemning a person to hell-fire is here expressed by his appointing such a person his portion with the unbelievers ; and, by consequence, that hell is the portion of unbelievers. Christ himself saith it, and therefore we cannot doubt of it, but that it is so, and that he would have us take special notice of it, that we may know how to prevent our falling into the same condemnation with them. But for our clearer understanding of it, we shall, by his assistance, consider,

I. What this portion of unbelievers is.

II. Who these unbelievers are whose portion it is.

III. Why it is their portion.

I. The first question is, What this portion of unbelievers is? how they live in the other world? or, if ye will, What kind of place that is, which the holy Scriptures call hell. This, I confess, is a very melancholy subject ; it cannot be treated, nor so much as seriously thought of, without horror and confusion. I cannot begin to cast my eye upon this dismal place, in order to my taking a survey of it, but I am struck with a panic of fear and dread, lest I myself, or any one that hears me, should come thither. I am sure we have all deserved it, and it is of God's infinite mercy that we are not there already ; that we are not at this very moment feeling, by our own woful experience, what it is to be in hell ; but still want to have it described to us. But, alas ! who is able to describe it? No one certainly that was never there, nor they who are there neither ; the torments which they there endure being far greater than any tongue is able to express. But why then should I attempt anything towards it? Not that I think it possible to give you a full

description of it; for when I have said all I can, if any of you should come thither, which God forbid, you will find all that I have said to be nothing in comparison of what you yourselves will feel. Neither do I attempt it out of any delight I take in such an ungrateful subject; for it cannot be more ungrateful to you, than it is unto myself; you cannot be more uneasy in hearing, than I am in speaking of it. It was some time before I could persuade myself to it; and I could never have done it, but that I saw it absolutely necessary to put you in mind of the dreadful consequences of your neglect of those means which God hath appointed for your obtaining eternal salvation by Jesus Christ. I have often told you of it already; I have advised you, I have exhorted you, I have prayed you in Christ's stead, that you would be reconciled to God, and to your duty to him; that you would not any longer despise or let slip these opportunities which you as yet enjoy, of performing your devotions unto God, and partaking of the mystical body and blood of your ever-blessed Redeemer, for the strengthening of faith, and all manner of grace and virtue in you, that you may serve God faithfully upon earth, and live with him for ever in heaven. But all hath been hitherto in vain to many of those, alas! for whom I must give account at the last day: because men live in ease and plenty at present, they think they shall always do so, and therefore cannot be persuaded to take any care for the future; or, if they do, it is only for the things of this world, as if they had no other world to live in, or did not care how they shall live in it; which is such an egregious folly and madness, that I do not know how I shall answer it to God, to you, or to myself, at the last day, if I should not

forewarn you of that miserable state and condition you will ere long be brought to, without a speedy and sincere repentance. And therefore, how troublesome soever it may be, either to you or myself, I must be forced to do it: but that you may be sure that I say nothing of it but what you will find to be most certainly true, I shall say no more of it than what ye have God's own word for. Ye cannot but all acknowledge, that he perfectly knows the state of those whom he himself condemns; and if they consult his holy word, wherein he hath revealed as much of it as is necessary for us to know, ye need go no further; for there you will find it to be such, that, if duly considered, it will make you dread the thoughts of ever coming into it.

Let us first hear what dreadful names this place is called by in holy Scriptures: it is called "hell-fire;" "the lake of fire and brimstone;" "the bottomless pit;" "everlasting punishment;" "everlasting shame and contempt;" "the blackness of darkness;" "outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth;" "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" "where they are tormented day and night for ever and ever;" "where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night;" "where they drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and are tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;" "where men are destroyed, both soul and body;" where they are "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Oh terrible expressions! Do not our ears tingle, do

not our hearts tremble, at the hearing of them? Yet this is the true state of the damned; this is the portion, the lamentable portion, of unbelievers, as it is described and set forth, in general, by God himself: and therefore we may be confident that every tittle of it is true, without venturing to go thither to find whether it be so or not.

But if we would know something more particularly about it, our best way will be to consult the sentence whereby unbelievers will be condemned to this dismal place; for, as we cannot doubt but the sentence contains all they are condemned to, so we may be sure, also, that it will be punctually executed in every particular. Now, for this we may remember, that He who at the last day will be Judge both of quick and dead, that we may not be surprised, hath told us beforehand how he will then proceed in this great affair; that "he will come in his glory," attended with all the holy angels, and being set upon the throne of his glory, all nations shall be gathered together before him; and that he will "separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left:" by the sheep meaning the righteous, as he himself explains it, or, which is all one, true believers; by the goats, the wicked, or unbelievers. "Then shall the King," or Judge, "say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 31—34. Happy, thrice happy they, to whom the Judge of the whole world shall then pronounce this blessed sentence! How joyful will they be, how pleasant will they look, when they see themselves set on his

right hand, and the Judge turning his eye towards them, smiling upon them, and bidding them come to him, assuring them that they are the blessed of his Father, whose good pleasure it is to give them the kingdom; and therefore bidding them all and every one go and take possession of it, as being his sons and heirs, saying, "Inherit the kingdom," the kingdom of heaven, "prepared for you," on purpose for you, "from the" very "foundation of the world!" In which few words are doubtless comprehended all the joy and comfort, all the bliss and happiness, that any man either is or can be capable of.

But let us now hear what this righteous Judge will then say to unbelievers, to those who stand dejected on his left hand; upon them, with a frowning and angry countenance, he will pronounce this dreadful sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Matt. xxv. 41. A dreadful sentence indeed! as full of dread and horror as so many words can hold; yea, as all the words in all the languages in the world are able to express. The very repeating of it here is enough to make us all tremble; but what then will they do, who shall hear it pronounced upon themselves by the Judge of the whole world? Every word in it will cut them to the heart, as being directly contrary to what they heard but just before pronounced upon others. To these the Judge said, "Come," to those, "Depart from me;" to these, "Come, ye blessed," to those, "Depart, ye cursed;" to these, "Inherit the kingdom," to those, "Depart into everlasting fire;" to these, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world," to those, "Go into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

I am loth to trespass so much upon your patience, as to trouble you with a more particular account of this sentence ; I know it is a very ungrateful office ; but, however, it is better for you to hear it explained, than to have it executed upon you. Let us, therefore, venture to look a little more narrowly into it.

The first word that the Judge will say to those on his left hand, is, " Depart from me ;" and if he said no more, this would be enough to strike them dead. To hear Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the only Saviour of the world, who had so often called upon them to come to him, that they might have life, to hear him now say, " Depart from me ! Begone ! See my face no more !" who can bear it ? What an unspeakable change will this one word make in their condition ! It will strip them naked of all they either have, or hope for ; by this they will be all deprived of everything that can do them good, and fully assured that they shall never enjoy the favour of God, nor any of the pleasures that are at his right hand ; but must live perpetually in extreme poverty and want, not only of all true joy and comfort, but of every thing that can make their eternal state so much as tolerable. As we see the rich man in the gospel had not so much as one drop of water to cool his tongue ; and though he begged ever so earnestly for no more than what might chance to hang upon the tip of a man's finger dipped in water, yet he could not get that, Luke xvi. 24, 25. And so it will be, as to everything else that can give them any ease or refreshment ; they must never look for it any more : for, being departed from Christ, they will depart from all light, and love, and peace, and liberty, and

health, and rest; from all goodness, compassion, and mercy; from all commodities and conveniences whatever, so as never to see one good day, no, not one good moment, any more. This is that which is usually called the punishment of loss; whereby men are punished with the loss, not only of the fruition of the chiefest good, but likewise of every thing that can be good for them; which of itself is so great a punishment, that some have thought it the greatest of all, greater than that of sense.

And yet, as if this was not great enough, these wretched creatures must not only depart from Christ, but he, who is the fountain of all blessings, will send them away with a curse upon them, saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed;" which word will be no sooner out of his mouth, but all the curses written in the law against sinners will immediately fasten upon them, and there stick for ever. Then their sins will all return upon them, and come as fresh into their minds as if they had been but just then committed, and every one will bring its sting and curse along with it. Job found something of this, when he cried out to God, "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth," Job xiii. 26; but this was nothing in comparison of what they that are in hell continually feel: they are made to possess the iniquities, not only of their youth, but of their whole lives, so as to be always full of the gall and bitterness that is in them. Here they could make a shift to forget their sins, or at least not to trouble themselves about them; but there their sins will all come rolling in upon them, like the waves of a troubled sea, one upon the back of another, and overwhelm them with grief and horror, do what

they can. Their pride, their unbelief, their lies, their oaths, their perjuries, their frauds, their covetousness, their oppressions, their extortions, their lusts, their passions, their intemperance, their debaucheries of all sorts, their profanations of God's holy name, their contempt of his word, their neglect of his service, their slighting of his sacraments, and whatever else they ever did, or spoke, or so much as thought, contrary to God's commands, they will all now meet together like so many furies, haunting and tormenting them day and night, without giving them one moment of ease or respite. This is that worm which our Saviour saith "never dieth," Mark ix. 44, but is always gnawing at their breasts, vexing and tormenting their whole soul, so that they perpetually fret and fume, and curse themselves, and wish ten thousand times they had been better, or had never been at all, or could cease to be, or could be anything but what they are; but all in vain.

For, hark! the Judge of all the earth will say further to them, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;" as they must go therefore into fire, this fire must last for ever. What kind of fire it is, it doth not concern us to know; but it concerns us rather to take care that we never know it: be sure it is such a fire as will "destroy both soul and body," Matt. x. 28. The body will be continually in a most acute and violent fever, that would consume it to ashes, if it was not held up by Almighty God himself, on purpose that it may live in the midst of this raging and tormenting flame. The rich glutton in the gospel found it to be so, when, being in hell, and seeing Abraham afar off, he cried unto him, and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger

in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame," Luke xvi. 24. This flame, it seems, had made him so excessively hot and thirsty, that it was a great torment to him. And so, doubtless, it is to the whole body; no part, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, being ever free from pain and anguish, the greatest, the sharpest that can possibly be endured: but if any part of the man be in greater torment than another, it is the heart or soul; it is there that the fire rageth the most horribly; the most fierce, the most furious, the most cruel and tormenting fire in the world, the fire of God's wrath and vengeance. This is that fire which burneth up the ungodly, who treasured up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and now they have it always burning in their breasts. He who made them is incensed against them, and he makes them see it too; but how can they be able to endure that sight? To behold the Almighty Creator and Governor of the world, the chiefest, the only good that is in it; to see him angry and displeased with them, and pouring out the utmost vials of his wrath and indignation upon them; this is a dreadful sight indeed! who can bear it? The very thinking of it is a terror to me; but what then shall we think of those who are forced to undergo it everlastingly? They certainly are in far greater misery and torment than we can think them to be.

Methinks I see them sighing and groaning, weeping and wailing, and gnashing their teeth, biting their lips, wringing their hands, fretting and fuming, and crying out, every one in the bitterness of his soul, Woe is me! for I am undone! I am undone for ever! I have provoked the great God of heaven against me! I would not obey and serve him while

I was upon earth, and now I am justly tormented in this flame! He was often pleased to tell me of it before, but, wicked wretch as I am, I would not believe it until now; but now I believe it, now I feel it to my cost! "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me," Job vi. 4. The Lord of hosts is angry; he that made me, he that kept me all my life long, he that was once so kind and merciful to me as to lay down his own life for me, he is now angry with me! he counts me for his enemy, and is now become an enemy to me! I see, I feel he is so! His wrath is waxen hot against me, and in me; my soul is all on a flame with it! What shall I do with myself? who can dwell in this devouring fire? who can live with these everlasting burnings? But whither can I go for refuge? who can hide me from the wrath of the Lamb? Oh that I might have my request, even that it "would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off," Job vi. 9, that I might live no longer in this lake that burneth with such fire and brimstone as this is!

But, alas! they may complain and wish what they please, it is all to no purpose. They would never hearken unto God while they were upon earth, and, now they are in hell, God will never hearken unto them; for the fire they are condemned to is "everlasting." Christ himself saith so in many places of his holy word, and in this very sentence too wherewith he will condemn them to it; and therefore they will find it to be so, notwithstanding what some false teachers may have told them to the contrary. And if anything can aggravate the torment

they are in, this certainly must do it, that they can see no end of it, but will be fully assured that it will never end at all ; that the worm will never die, the fire will never be quenched, Mark ix. 44 ; no, nor abated in the least : but when they have endured it ten thousand millions of ages, they must still endure it as many more, and after that as many more again, and so go on and on to all eternity. Oh ! what a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God ! How severely will he deal with unbelievers at the last day ! He will condemn them to be burnt alive ; in the most proper sense, to be burnt so as always to live in the midst of burnings, yea, in that everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels : which, as it is the last, so it is the severest part of the sentence. He tells the righteous, that the kingdom they shall inherit was prepared for them : " Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But he doth not tell the unbelievers that the fire they must go to was prepared for them, but " for the devil and his angels." And the reason is, because the angels fell ; and therefore this fire was prepared for them, and they were all condemned to it before man was created. And it was designed at first only for them ; for man being afterwards created in the image of God, every way pure and perfect, he might, if he would, have continued in the same state : and he was no sooner fallen, but he had a Saviour promised, by whom he and his whole posterity, if they would have believed in him, might have been restored to their first state, and so might have never been in danger of hell-fire. But seeing many men, by not believing in this their Saviour, have no part or share in that salvation which is promised in him ; therefore God is justly

pleased to condemn them to the same punishment which he had before prepared for the fallen angels. He did not think good to make another hell for them besides that which he had already made: there was no need of that, for apostate men are as guilty before him as the apostate angels were; and, therefore, might justly be condemned, as they are here, to the same everlasting fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels. And this is put into the very sentence whereby they are condemned, as a great aggravation of the punishment they are condemned to.

And so, doubtless, it is a very great aggravation of the punishment of unbelievers, that they shall be made equal to the fallen angels in shame and misery, as the righteous are equal to the holy angels in bliss and glory, Luke xx. 36. For the devil and his angels are condemned to the greatest torments that can be inflicted on them. And that the same should be inflicted upon sinful men too, may justly make us every one cry out with Moses, at the terrible sight upon mount Sinai, "I exceedingly fear and quake," Heb. xii. 21. I tremble exceedingly at the thoughts of this condemnation, which in all respects will be as severe upon men as upon the devils themselves, and in some respects more. For it will greatly augment their misery and torment, that they must be always forced to live in such company; that whilst the saints or believers enjoy the sweet and pleasant conversation of the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, and are every way like unto them in heaven, the wicked, or unbelievers, must converse perpetually with the unclean spirits, their most bitter and implacable enemies, so full of fury, and malice, and

power too, where God permits them to exert it, that one of them is enough to affright a whole army of men out of their wits. But what then will a whole army of them do to one man, to one unarmed man, every way unable to help himself, as every unbeliever will there be in the midst of all these fiends of hell! What a hurry and confusion must they needs be in who live with that wicked crew for whom hell-fire was at first prepared! What misery and torment do they suffer there, where they have no peace nor quiet, neither in themselves, nor yet from any that are about them; but though all be in the height of torment themselves, yet every one helps to torment another too! What a miserable life do these wretched creatures live! never free from the greatest pain, never out of the worst company that is in the whole world; and that, which is worst of all, they can never hope it shall be otherwise with them, but are fully assured that this must be their portion for ever, by Him who cannot lie, when he said to them, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

By this we may know something of that dark and doleful place which we call hell; God grant that we may never know more of it, at least not experimentally. But this, I suppose, may be sufficient to prevail with us to take all the care we can that we may never come there, nor go in the steps of the far greatest part of mankind, who walk directly in the way that leads thither, without ever looking before them, or considering whither it will bring them at last, even into that infernal pit that is the portion of unbelievers.

II. Let us, therefore, now leave the place, and

consider the inhabitants, these unbelievers, to whom it seems, by our Saviour's own words, this dismal place doth in a peculiar manner belong; so that they who are sent thither are here said to have their portion appointed them with unbelievers; whereby we are fully assured that all unbelievers do as certainly go to the place we have now been speaking of, as we have been speaking of it. And therefore, it highly concerns us to know who these unbelievers are, that we may avoid their company, and take heed that we be not found in the number of them.

Now, for this we must first observe in general, that all who do not believe what God hath said in the books of the Old and New Testament, concerning himself, his Son, his Holy Spirit, his works, his law, his threats, his promises, and whatsoever else is there revealed by him; all, I say, who do not actually and really believe that, are the unbelievers here spoken of; for God's word is the only ground of our faith. What he hath said we are bound to believe, only because he said it; and he who doth not do so, whatever or however he may believe besides, he is still, in a Scripture sense, an unbeliever. And whether he believe it yet or not, he will find it to be so at the last day.

This being premised in general, it will be easy to give a more particular account of the great number of unbelievers that always have been, or still are in the world. For, first, all heathens or pagans, who never had God's holy word, in which they should believe, preached or made known unto them, must needs be unbelievers; for, as the apostle argues, "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14. Again, all Jews, who,

though they own the Old Testament to be of Divine inspiration, yet reject the New; and through the blindness and hardness of their hearts deny Jesus to be the Christ; and therefore will not believe the whole word of God, and particularly that part of it which is revealed to us by his only Son in his holy gospel: these are all unbelievers; and so are all turks and mohammedans, who prefer the Alcoran, the work of a wicked impostor, before the Bible, which is the word of God himself; and therefore do not believe Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world, as he is there said to be. These are all so plainly unbelievers in a gospel sense, that none can deny it who believe the gospel to be true; that is, none but they who are unbelievers themselves.

But though these heathen, jews, and turks, be all unbelievers, yet we must not think that they are all the unbelievers that are in the world; for, to our shame and grief be it spoken, there are many such to be found among christians themselves, among those who profess to believe Christ and all that he hath said; yea, all who only profess to do so, but do it not, are still unbelievers, notwithstanding their profession. For "it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness," Rom. x. 10; and, therefore, whatever a man may profess with his mouth, or in outward show, unless he be fully persuaded in his mind of the truth and certainty of all that God hath said in his holy word, and really in his heart believeth on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as he is there revealed, he is, after all, as truly an unbeliever as they who never heard of Christ or his gospel.

But are there any such among us? Men who profess to believe the gospel, and yet do it not? Men

who are called christians, and yet are unbelievers? I heartily wish there were not. But I fear, upon an impartial inquiry, we shall find that the greatest part of those who live within the pale of the church are as great unbelievers as they who live without it; or, at least, such who are so like them, that they shall have their portion with unbelievers.

For, first, all who persist in any damnable heresy which overthroweth or undermineth the foundations of that religion which is revealed in the gospel of Christ, however they may pretend to believe the Scriptures, they really do not, but are as much unbelievers as they who reject them. As, for example, the arians and socinians, who deny the most holy Trinity, the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, and such great mysteries of our holy religion, because they, forsooth, are not able to comprehend them within the compass of their own reason and understanding. For it is plain that such people believe no part of God's word as they ought, because it is his word, but because they understand it; not because he saith it, but because their reason tells them it is so; and therefore do not believe God, but themselves. For if they believed anything in God's word, merely upon his word, so as to make his assertion or revelation of it the only ground of their faith, as all true believers must do, then they could not but believe such mysteries also, which are as clearly asserted and revealed in God's word as anything is which they pretend to understand. But I shall not insist at present upon these, because, blessed be God, there are not many of them: but some there are, too many, to augment the number of unbelievers among us.

But the greatest number of unbelievers are such as

St. Paul speaks of, who "profess that they know God, but in works they deny him," Tit. i. 16; who pretend to own that the Scriptures are the word of God, and that they therefore believe all that is there written; and yet live quite contrary to it, or at least do not observe all that is there commanded. These are they who seem to be chiefly aimed at in my text: for the person here spoken of was a servant of God's own house, and had a considerable office there; and therefore must needs acknowledge the Master of the house to be his Lord, and profess that he believed himself to be bound to do whatever his Lord required of him. But seeing, instead of that, he fell to drinking and abusing his fellow-servants, therefore his Lord appoints him "his portion with the unbelievers," or, as it is in St. Matthew, with "hypocrites," Matt. xxiv. 51. Some think that our Saviour used both these words, and that St. Matthew records one, and St. Luke the other. But they both amount to the same thing; for every hypocrite is an unbeliever, as this servant was. However he might dissemble with his Master, and make as if he was his faithful servant, yet by his works he showed that he was not; and therefore is justly reckoned among unbelievers, and hath his portion with them.

There are many such unbelievers in the midst of Christ's own church, as militant here on earth: for he himself saith, "Many are called, but few chosen," Matt. xx. 16; and, "Many will say to me at that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," Matt. vii. 22, 23.

These were great professors indeed ; they publicly owned Christ to be their Lord, they prophesied, they cast out devils, they wrought many wonderful things in his name. Who can say but these were believers ? Christ himself can and will, in effect, say so at the last day, unless they have done good as well as wonderful works in his name ; for he will profess to them that he never knew them. And if he never knew or owned them for his disciples, whatever they might pretend, be sure they never believed aright in him. And therefore, he in anger bids them begone from him, and tells them the reason why he doeth so, saying, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity ;" which is the same, in effect, as that dreadful sentence before explained, wherewith he will condemn all unbelievers at the last day, saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And he will then give them the same reason too, saying, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink," Matt. xxv. 42—46. Not but that he will then inquire into their other sins as well as these ; but these being the most plain and obvious, and yet seldom taken notice of by men, he instanceth in them only for example sake, to show how he will proceed at the last day in a strict examination of their whole lives ; what duties they had omitted, as well as what sins they had committed, either against God or their neighbour. Much less must we think, as some ignorant people have done, because our Saviour here mentions only such acts of charity, that he will not inquire into our faith as well as manners. For they may as well gather from hence, that he will not then examine whether a man hath been holy, and just, and

humble, and sober, and the like, but only whether he hath been charitable, as they can, that he will examine only how he hath lived, and not how he hath believed. But, besides that, we are assured from God's own word, that men must answer for their thoughts and opinions, as well as for their words and actions; and that there are damnable heresies, as well as damnable sins, 2 Pet. ii. 1: besides that, I say, our Saviour in this very place forewarns us that he will examine how we stood affected towards him in those very acts of charity which he here specifies. He will say to the righteous, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Matt. xxv. 40. And to the wicked, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren," (or disciples,) "ye did it not to me," Matt. xxv. 45. Which plainly shows, that he will inquire how we performed these acts of charity; and that, unless we did them out of respect to him, he will reckon them as nothing, at least not as good works. But no man can respect Christ in anything he doeth, unless he believe in him; and therefore they who do not that, whatever else they do, will be sure to be condemned as workers of iniquity, such as all unbelievers are. And as all unbelievers are workers of iniquity, so all workers of iniquity are unbelievers. All who live in any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty, whatever profession they make of faith, how much soever they pretend to believe in Christ and in the word of God, they do it not; but are as plainly unbelievers at the bottom as those who never so much as pretended any such thing, as might easily be demonstrated by

many arguments. I shall instance at present only in these few.

First, the principle of self-preservation is imprinted in the very nature of all men, as well as other creatures: no man will choose to do that which he believes will undo him. Who will drink that cup which he believes to be deadly poison? Who will go to that place where he believes he shall be killed as soon as he comes there? Who will do that now which he believes will make him miserable all his life after? No man that hath the right use of his senses and reason can act so contrary to himself, to his own interest, and to that principle by which he and all men are actuated. And yet this is our present case: God hath said in his word, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. xviii. 20. "Tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul that doeth evil," Rom. ii. 9. "The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 46. Now, if a man believes these and such like expressions that came from God himself, would he dare to allow himself in any sin, or in the neglect of any duty which God requires of him? Would a man steal to-day, if he was sure that he shall die for it to-morrow? Would he do anything that God hath forbidden, if he believed at the same time that God would destroy him, both soul and body, in hell-fire? Would he leave anything undone which God hath bid him do, if he really believed that he should thereby get more than all this world is worth? It is impossible; self-love and interest would not suffer him. And therefore, they who continue in any wicked course of life may talk what they please, but they do not really believe either God's threats

or promises, or anything that he hath said in his holy word, but are as great unbelievers as turks or heathens, or any that never heard of it.

The same appears also from the great power that true faith hath upon the minds of men, not only in its own nature, but likewise by the grace of God, which always accompanies and works together with it. Christ himself saith, that we are sanctified by faith in him, Acts xxvi. 18; St. Peter, that God purifies our hearts by faith, Acts xv. 9; St. Paul, that Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17; St. John, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," 1 John v. 4. And the same apostle in one place saith, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," 1 John v. 1; in another, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," 1 John iii. 9. From whence we may certainly conclude, that all those who are not holy, those who are not pure in heart, those who are not governed by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, those who do not overcome the world, those who commit or live in sin, those have not faith, not that quick and lively faith which the gospel requires, but are all in the number of the unbelievers spoken of in my text.

But to prove this, I need not have gone from the place before quoted, where our Saviour saith, that he will say to those who profess to believe in him, but work iniquity, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity;" for it is plain from hence, that all workers of iniquity shall be condemned to everlasting punishment. But it is as plain also, from our Saviour's own words, that "he that believeth on him is not condemned," John iii. 18; but "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark xvi. 16. From

whence it necessarily follows, that they who work iniquity do not believe; for if they did, they could not be condemned: but seeing they will most certainly be all condemned, they are all as certainly unbelievers; and so they will find at the last day, when they shall have that dreadful portion which is allotted for them.

III. But you will say, perhaps, in the last place, Why is it their portion in such an especial manner, that they who are condemned to hell-fire are here said to have their portion appointed them with unbelievers? Why with unbelievers, rather than any other sort of sinners? To this we may answer, in short, that unbelievers, as such, are the greatest sinners in the world; for not to believe what God saith, is such an affront to his Divine majesty, as cannot be named without horror. It is giving God himself the lie, as St. John observes, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar," 1 John v. 10. And therefore, if a man were guilty of no other sin but this, this is of itself sufficient to sink him into the lowest place in the bottomless pit. But, alas! they who are guilty of this, are guilty of all other sins too; for "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6; or do anything else but sin, through the whole course of a man's life. So that unbelievers, of all men, are sure to be condemned; there is no help in the world for it: the means which God hath appointed for our salvation are all lost as to them. The word preached doth not profit them, not being mixed with faith in their hearing of it. Their praying avails them nothing, in that it is not the prayer of faith. The holy Scriptures are but a dead letter to them; and the Lord's supper itself mere bread and wine, in that they receive it not by

faith; yea, the very blood of Christ will stand them in no stead, because they do not believe in him. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. "He," therefore, "that believeth" in him "shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," as our Saviour himself hath also said, Mark xvi. 16. From whence we may infallibly conclude, that all unbelievers, and none but they, will be condemned to that horrid place before described, "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone;" which may, therefore, most properly be said to be their place or portion, as belonging peculiarly unto them, and to none else; it being as certain that all unbelievers shall be condemned to it, as it is that all believers shall be saved from it.

And if so, how much doth it concern us all to believe aright, as the gospel requires, so as to be fully persuaded in our minds of the truth and certainty of all and every thing that is revealed in God's holy word, with a sure trust and confidence of all and every one of the promises which are there made to mankind in Jesus Christ our Lord! For without such a quick and lively faith, however we may flatter ourselves at present, it will not be long before we shall be tormented in that everlasting fire which is "prepared for the devil and his angels." There is no way possible to avoid it; it is the portion of unbelievers: and if we be unbelievers, it must be our portion for ever. Wherefore, brethren, we had need to look about us, and leave no stone unturned, but catch at all opportunities we can get, to beget and increase in us true faith, or a firm belief of God's word; by considering often

with ourselves whose word it is, the word of Him who cannot lie; by constant hearing and receiving it, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them who believe, and none else; by performing our daily devotions unto God, beseeching him, for Christ Jesus' sake, to help our unbelief, to banish all doubtful thoughts out of our hearts, and to increase our faith every day more and more; by frequent receiving of that blessed sacrament which was ordained on purpose to put us in mind of our Saviour, and to confirm and strengthen our faith in him; by meditating continually upon something or other that God hath said in his holy oracles, and exercising our faith accordingly upon it.

By the hearty and constant use of these means we may all attain to true faith, so as to be able to live by it, in a right belief of all the truths, in a holy fear of all the threatenings, in confident dependence upon all the promises, and in sincere obedience to all the laws which Almighty God hath revealed to us in his holy word: then we shall be true believers indeed; for then our hearts will be always fixed, trusting in the Lord, and deriving power and virtue from him, to serve and honour him all the rest of our days: and then we need not fear that we shall ever have our portion with unbelievers in outer darkness; for we shall then "be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and shall have it accordingly conferred upon us by him in whom we believe, Jesus Christ the righteous; "to whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever."

FAITH IN CHRIST, THE ONLY MEANS OF
OVERCOMING THE WORLD.

1 JOHN V. 5.

WHO IS HE THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, BUT HE THAT
BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.

UNBELIEF is not only a great sin of itself, but one great cause of all other sins. It may be truly called the mother of sin, as the devil is the father: for it was that which, by his instigation, brought forth sin at first into the world, and it is that which still maintains and keeps it. When the old serpent assaulted our first parents, the first attack he made was upon their faith; and when that was once shaken, he soon brought them down. God had said to Adam, and in him to the woman, which was not as yet taken out of him, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 16, 17. But when the serpent came to the woman, the first thing he did was to call God's word into question: "Yea," saith he, "hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Gen. iii. 1; and so tempted her to doubt whether God had ever said so or not, or whether he really meant as he said. And the woman began immediately to make some doubt of it, as appears from her answer to the question; for she said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but

of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die," Gen. iii. 2, 3. In which answer she did not keep close, as she should have done, to God's words, but deviated from them in several respects. God had not said, "Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden," which was the tree of life; but, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it:" neither had God said, "Ye shall not touch it;" but only, "Ye shall not eat of it:" neither had he said, "Lest ye die;" but, "Ye shall surely die:" whereas that expression, "Lest ye die," implies as if it were a question whether they should or not; so that she plainly began to doubt of the truth of what God had said.

This the serpent takes hold of, and, perceiving her faith began to fail, to strike it quite dead, he said in plain terms, "Ye shall not surely die;" just contrary to what God had said. And he gives a reason for it too; for, saith he, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," Gen. iii. 5; where he again contradicts the word of God, and yet hath the impudence to appeal to God himself for the proof of what he said. God had said, They should die in the day they ate of that fruit; and the serpent saith, That in the day they ate of it, their eyes should be opened: yet, nevertheless, upon the serpent's peremptorily asserting it, the woman believed him rather than God, and therefore, "when she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her

husband with her, and he did eat ;” which certainly neither of them would have done, if they had firmly believed the word of God, when he said, “ That in the day they ate thereof they should surely die.” From whence it appears, that unbelief was the first sin that man fell into, and that which made way for all the other sins that mankind hath since committed ; for all men being then contained in the first, he thus falling by his unbelief, all fell with him into that state of sin wherein they now lie, prone to all manner of vice and wickedness.

This, I confess, at first sight may seem very remote to the words I have chosen for my text ; but we shall see presently that it will give us much light into them. For which purpose we must further observe, that although all men are condemned for the unbelief of their first parents, yet our most merciful Creator hath so ordered it, that none suffer, but for their own personal unbelief ; the sentence being never executed, but only upon those who are guilty of it themselves, in their own proper persons, as well as in their common head : for the same day on which the first Adam fell by his not believing the word of God, God was pleased to raise up another Adam, his only begotten Son, his own eternal Word, “ that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John iii. 16. So that as unbelief was the occasion of our fall and destruction in the first Adam, faith is now made the condition of our rise and salvation by the Second. And, therefore, no man can now perish, but by reason of his own unbelief ; because he will not believe in the Son of God, nor in what God hath said concerning him ; for if he doeth that, he hath God’s word for it that he shall not perish, as Adam had it,

that he should die if he ate of the forbidden fruit. There is only this difference between them, that God spake to Adam by way of threatening, he speaks to us by way of promise; but both are equally the word of God; and we have the same ground to believe what he hath promised to us in Christ, as Adam had to believe what he had threatened to him; or rather, if possible, more; forasmuch as the threatening was only by the word spoken, the promise is by the Word incarnate: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," John i. 14, in our own nature united to his Divine person. And if we do but rightly believe in this Word, we shall as certainly be saved by him, as we were condemned by our unbelief in the first man.

This the devil knows well enough, and so he did from the beginning; and therefore, as he overcame our first parents, by tempting them not to believe God's word; so he hath endeavoured ever since, and still doth, either to destroy or corrupt men's faith in Christ. If he can but do that, he cares for no more, for then he is sure of them. For this purpose, therefore, he doeth all he can to keep men off from believing anything at all concerning Christ; and if he cannot do that, then he strives to make them believe wrong, and otherwise than God hath said. But his main drift and design is to tempt men to deny or doubt of Christ's Divinity, as the main foundation upon which our faith is grounded. And if he can once prevail upon men to do that, he need not trouble himself to tempt them to any notorious vice; for how well soever they may seem to live, as to outward appearance, they can never truly mortify any one sin, nor do any one act that will be acceptable unto God: for whatever they may pretend,

they can never overcome the world, no more than their first parents did, by reason of their unbelief. This we may be sure of, for we have God's own word for it, saying, by his apostle, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" which is the same as if he had positively said, No man whatever can overcome the world, but only he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

But that ye may more fully understand both the sense and certainty of this Divine proposition, we must first explain the terms in each part of it, and then confirm the truth of the whole. The proposition consisteth of two parts, and accordingly the terms to be explained are only these two in general; first, what it is to overcome the world; and then, what it is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. When these terms are explained, it will be easy to put them together, and to show the necessary connexion between them, and to the truth and certainty of the whole proposition.

To know what it is to overcome the world, we must first consider what that world is which we are to overcome. But we need not go far to find out that it is a term which this apostle often useth, especially in this epistle; and therefore, lest we should be mistaken in it, he himself is pleased to tell us, in effect, what he means by it, where he saith, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15. For here he plainly opposeth the world to God, and makes use of that word to signify that which is repugnant or contrary to the Divine will and nature; for he makes the love of God, and of the world, to be inconsistent,

so that no man can love them both together. "He who loves God cannot love the world; but he that loves the world cannot love God." And therefore, by the world, the apostle here means the same that his Master did by the word "mammon," where he saith, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon," Matt. vi. 24. But that we may be sure to understand the full meaning and extent of the word, the apostle, in the following words, tells us what the world, in his sense of the word, consists of: "for," saith he, "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," 1 John ii. 16. Where he again asserts the world to be contrary to God, and reduceth all that is in it to three heads: sensual pleasures, earthly riches, and pride or vain-glory; so that these three things make up the whole world, in the sense wherein he useth the word.

Now, by this we may easily discover what he means by overcoming the world; for he can mean nothing else but the suppressing all inordinate desires of the pleasures, riches, and honours, of this world; and of everything that hinders us from doing our duty to God, and keeping his commandments: as appears also from the context itself. In the next verse but one before my text, the apostle saith, that to the regenerate, of whom he speaks, God's "commandments are not grievous;" and in the next verse he gives the reason of it: "for," saith he, "whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world:" which would be no reason at all, unless by overcoming the world he meant subduing our affections

for the things of this world, which are repugnant to, and oppose themselves against God's commandments, and so make them grievous to us, because they cross our corrupt inclinations. Whereas those who are regenerate, having their minds taken off from the things of this world, they are thereby freed from those obstacles which made the keeping of God's commandments difficult and grievous to them, and so observe them with ease and pleasure. And therefore, by overcoming the world, in my text, he must needs mean the same thing, even such a subduing and suppressing our love and desire of the pleasures, riches, and honours of this world, that we can with ease walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless: so that no man can be truly said to have overcome the world, until he hath got so much above it, as to make it his constant care to avoid all manner of evil, and to do all the good he can. This is that which the apostle here saith no man can do, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God; the meaning of which words comes next to be considered.

There are several persons who, in the holy Scriptures, are said to be the sons of God, even all that are regenerate, and born again of water and the Holy Ghost; but these are made the sons of God, because Jesus, their Head, to whom they are united, is so: yea, it is he who makes them so; for, "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12. And he who can give power to others to become the sons of God, must needs be so himself in a more eminent and peculiar manner; he is not only his Son, as others are, but his only begotten Son, which no one is ever called but

himself. But he is frequently called so, both by others and by himself too, who best knew how he was the Son of God: "God so loved 'the world,'" saith he, "that he gave his only begotten Son," meaning himself, John iii. 16; and so elsewhere. From whence it is manifest, that he is the Son of God, not by adoption, nor by regeneration, but by real generation; for he was begotten of God the Father, and therefore is his Son in the highest and most proper sense that can be, so as to be in all respects of the self-same nature with the Father, according to the common notion of generation.

And that we might not be altogether ignorant of the way how he was begotten of the Father, he himself acquaints us with as much of it as is necessary, or indeed possible for us to know, where he saith, "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," John v. 26. To have life in himself is proper and peculiar only to God; all things else that live, besides him, living not in themselves, but in him: "For in him we live," saith the apostle, Acts xvii. 28. But this essential property of God, and so the Divine essence itself, the Father gave or communicated to the Son, and that too in the same manner as it is in himself, without any difference or distinction at all; but only that the one gave it, and therefore is properly the Father begetting; the other received it, and therefore is properly the Son begotten of him. And hence it is, that although they be both the same God, as having the same Divine essence each in himself; yet the Son is so the same God, that, according to what the council of Nice declared out of the holy Scriptures, he is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made,"

but still “of one substance with the Father;” as he himself also declared, saying, “I and my Father are one,” John x. 30. *Ἔσμεν*, “we are,” in the plural number, and therefore distinct subsistencies; but “we are one,” in the singular number; not *εἷς*, “one person,” but *ἓν ἔσμεν*, “we are one Being, one Essence, one Substance, one Jehovah, one God.” And so they who heard him speak these words plainly understood him, for they took up stones to cast at him; and the reason they gave him for it, was because, as they said to him, “thou, being a man, makest thyself God,” John x. 33. In like manner, upon another occasion, when Jesus had called God his Father, the Jews sought to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, “making himself equal with God,” John v. 18; which shows, that when he called himself “the Son of God,” or said, that God was his Father, they apprehended his meaning to be, that he himself was God equal to the Father: and so plainly it was, as the catholic church likewise hath all along believed.

In this sense, therefore, we ought to believe Jesus to be the Son of God, because this is the sense wherein the holy Scriptures declare him to be so; and he that believes it in any other sense, his faith is groundless and null, as having no foundation in God’s word, so that he cannot properly be said to believe it at all. And verily it is our unspeakable comfort and happiness, that this great fundamental article of our whole religion, even that Jesus Christ is so the Son of God, as to be himself truly God, of the same nature, substance, and glory with the Father, is so clearly, so fully, so frequently revealed to us in the holy Scriptures, that none, unless they wilfully shut their eyes, but may easily see it; and

none can deny or doubt of it, but only such as the devil hath got the same power over which he had over our first parents, to make them deny or doubt of what God himself hath said.

But I hope none here present do so, and therefore I need not insist any longer upon it, especially considering that it hath been so fully proved by many learned men, beyond all contradiction. However, that I may contribute something towards the confirming your faith in it, I shall only observe two or three things, not usually taken notice of, in our Saviour's life and actions while he was upon earth, which plainly demonstrate him to be the true God.

First, therefore, when Satan would have had Jesus fall down and worship him, "Jesus said unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10; which shows, that he judged it to be utterly unlawful to worship any but the true God, and detested the very mention of it; and yet he himself had such worship often performed to him. A leper worshipped him, Matt. viii. 2; a certain ruler worshipped him, Matt. ix. 18; the woman of Canaan worshipped him, Matt. xv. 25; the man that was born blind worshipped him, John ix. 38; his own disciples worshipped him, Matt. xiv. 33; the women that came to his sepulchre after he was risen, worshipped him, Matt. xxviii. 9; his apostles also worshipped him after his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 17; and again at his ascension, Luke xxiv. 52. All these, and doubtless many others, worshipped him, and yet he never rebuked them for it; as he would certainly have done, if he had not been the true God, to whom alone such worship was due, according to his own words. All acknowledge him

to be a good man ; but no good man, nor any good creature whatever, would have suffered himself to be thus worshipped as a God, without reproving those who did it. When Cornelius fell down to worship Peter, he took him up, saying, "Stand up, I myself also am a man," Acts x. 25, 26. When the priest of Jupiter, with the men of Lystra, would have done sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, the apostles rent their clothes, and ran in among them, crying out, and saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you," Acts xiv. 14, 15. When St. John would have worshipped the angel, the angel said to him, "See thou do it not ; I am thy fellow-servant ; worship God," Rev. xix. 10 ; xxii. 9. But we find nothing of this in Christ. When people worshipped him, he never forbade them, nor reproved them for it ; but accepted of it, and showed himself to be well pleased with it, by working miracles for them that did it : which he would never have done, if he had not been the true God, whom all the creatures in the world are bound to worship. But it is no wonder that he accepted of Divine worship from men, when it is the Divine command, that "all the angels worship him," Heb. i. 6. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," John v. 23. And, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii. 10, 11.

Again I observe, that Christ, in his revelation of the Divine will, always speaks as from himself in his own name. He never saith, as the prophets are wont to do, "The Lord hath spoken ;" or "Thus

saith the Lord ; but, " Thus I say. I say unto you. Swear not at all. I say unto you, Love your enemies. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And so all along he speaks with authority, with Divine authority ; not as the scribes, nor as the prophets, nor as any other creature must have done, that would not usurp upon God's prerogative. Neither doth he call upon men, as the prophets do, " to turn unto the Lord," but bids them come to him ; " Come unto me, all ye that labour : take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," Matt. xi. 28, 29. " Ye believe in God, believe also in me," John xiv. 1. " Abide in me, and I in you," John xv. 4. " If ye love me, keep my commandments." Well might the officers which were sent to apprehend him, say, " Never man spake like this man," John vii. 46. For this could not be the language of a man, but God ; especially seeing he makes his promises, as well as laws, in his own name, and such promises which none but God can ever perform, and therefore would never make ; as, " I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. " I will send the Comforter," John xvi. 7. " I will raise him up at the last day," John vi. 39, 44. " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," John xii. 32. " Upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18. Many such expressions came from him, which discovered him to be God, as plainly as those places do it where he is expressly called so.

But that which I look upon as most observable of all, is, that he did not only speak, but act in his own name, and by his own power. He saith, I confess, in one place, " I am come in my Father's name,"

John v. 43. And in another, "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me," John x. 25. But we must observe, that he doth not say, in the name of God, but "of his Father." If he had said, in the name of God, some might have been apt to think, though without ground, that he himself was not God; for if he were, it would have been more proper to have said, he came or acted in his own name. But to prevent that mistake, he saith only, "in the name of the Father," and so he acted, even as God in the name of the Father, because he received his Divine essence, and so the power by which he acted, from the Father. In which sense he saith, "I can of mine own self do nothing," John v. 30. And, "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things," John viii. 28. And, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not," John x. 37. And so all along he speaks of the Father, as the person from whom he received his power, as being his Son; but still he acted by that power immediately from himself, as being God.

To prove this, we need go no further than the works of creation, wherein God did most clearly exert and show forth his power and Godhead, in producing all things out of nothing by a word of his mouth. He only said, "Let there be light, and there was light," Gen. i. 3. "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place; and it was so," Gen. i. 9. "Let the earth bring forth grass; and it was so," Gen. i. 11. Thus the whole creation was finished, only by God's expressing and signifying his will, that every thing should be as he pleased, and so it was; which was such an act of Divine power, that no creature could ever pretend to it, nor indeed can be capable of it, it being an incommuni-

cable perfection of the Divine nature to act so immediately in and of itself, and perfectly according to its own will.

And yet this was the way that Christ acted when he was upon earth ; and so demonstrated his Divine power and glory the same way as God had done in making of the world. For when there came a leper to him, saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," Jesus only said, "I will. be thou clean," and it was so ; "the leprosy was immediately cleansed," Matt. viii. 2, 3. When, at several times, he saw Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John, and Levi, the son of Alphaeus, he said, "Follow me," and it was so ; "they left all, and followed him," Matt. iv. 18—22 ; Mark ii. 14. When there arose a great storm, and the waves of the sea beat into the ship where he was, he only said, "Peace, be still," and it was so ; "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm," Mark iv. 39. When he came to Jairus's house, and found his daughter lying dead, he only said, "Talitha cumi ; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise," and it was so ; "the damsel straightway arose, and walked," Mark v. 41, 42. When they brought to him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech, he only said, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened," and it was so ; for "straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain," Mark vii. 34, 35. When he saw a fig-tree with leaves and no fruit upon it, he only said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," and it was so ; for "presently the fig-tree withered away," Matt. xxi. 19. When he came near the city of Nain, and saw a dead man carried out to be buried, he only said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise,"

and it was so; for "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak," Luke vii. 14, 15. When Lazarus had been dead four days, and was laid in his grave, he only said, "Lazarus, come forth," and it was so; "he that was dead came forth," John xi. 43, 44. There are many such instances to be found in the gospel, of Christ's acting merely by his word: and what, if it be possible, is more remarkable, he did the same by his apostles, who wrought miracles only in his name; as when Peter saw a lame man, he said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," and he did so, Acts iii. 6—8. At Lystra he said to the cripple, as it is in the old greek manuscripts, "In the name of Jesus Christ, stand upright on thy feet," and so he did, Acts xiv. 10. Ananias said unto Saul, "The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight," Acts ix. 17; which gives light to Acts xxii. 13. Thus Peter said to Eneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed," and he did so, Acts ix. 34. St. Paul said to the damsel possessed with an evil spirit, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her," and so he did, Acts xvi. 18. This was their constant way of working miracles, insomuch that the Jewish exorcists taking notice of it, they also called over them that had familiar spirits, in the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth," Acts xix. 13. In all which it is to be observed, that Christ had no sooner spoken the word with his own mouth, or by his apostles, but the thing was done; which plainly shows that he could do what he would, only by willing it should be done: which, as it is the proper notion of omnipotence, so it is an un-

deniable argument and demonstration of his Godhead. From all which it appears that God himself, in the holy Scriptures, hath declared, both by his words and works, that Jesus Christ is his own natural or essential Son, of the same nature and substance with himself; and, therefore, whosoever would believe aright, according to his own word, must thus believe that "Jesus is the Son of God."

The terms being thus explained, what it is to overcome the world, and how we are to believe that Jesus is the Son of God; we are now to consider what dependence one of them hath upon the other, and so the truth of this whole proposition, that no man can overcome the world, but he who believeth Jesus to be the Son of God. But for this we need not go from the text itself, which being God's own word, cannot but be true; and we shall have all the reason in the world to believe it, whether we understand the reason of it, how it comes to be so or not. For it is not the reason of the thing, but the testimony of God, that is the true ground of our faith; and how many reasons soever may be given for it, they add no more to the ground of our believing it, than they do to the truth itself. What God saith is true, whether we know the reason of it or not; and if we can give ten thousand reasons for it, we are still to believe it only because God saith it. For otherwise it is not faith, but science; and therefore all reason hath to do in this case, is only to search into the grounds we have to believe that God said it; which being once supposed or proved, we must believe the thing itself only upon God's word. And we have all the reason in the world to do so, because he cannot lie; and therefore what he saith cannot but be true. And we are bound by our reason itself to

believe it, although it be above our reason, so that we cannot understand or comprehend it.

Indeed, in this our corrupt and imperfect state, our understandings are so weak and dark, that we can scarcely see into the reason of the least thing that is before us, much less into these great things, so much above us, which God hath been pleased to reveal to us, and which need not have been revealed, if we could have known them without it. And therefore, if there be any such thing as reason in us, nothing can be so contrary to it as not to believe the great mysteries of the gospel, as the Divinity and incarnation of the Son of God, although revealed by God himself, because we cannot comprehend them. For by the same reason, if it may be so called, we must believe nothing at all, at least concerning God. For we can no more comprehend his omnipresence, his omniscience, his eternity, and other his Divine perfections, than we can how three persons are in one nature, and two natures in one person. We can no more comprehend the Divine nature, than we can the Trinity of persons in it; and yet they who pretend to be the great masters of reason, have so little of that which they pretend to, as to believe one, and not the other, although they have the same reason for both, even the word of God himself; and although nothing which God hath said in his holy word be so much above our reason, as it is contrary to all reason not to believe what he hath said.

Wherefore, he having said, "that no man can overcome the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God;" we need look no further for a reason why we ought to believe it, it being as certain as God is true. Yet, nevertheless, it being a truth

wherein all men are highly concerned, that they may be more deeply affected with it, I shall endeavour to give you a little more light into it, by setting before you, and proving these three propositions :

I. That no man can overcome the world but by Jesus Christ.

II. No man can do it by him, except he believe in him.

III. No man can believe in him for it, except he believe him to be the Son of God.

I. The truth of the first proposition will appear sufficiently by showing two things. 1. That no man can overcome the world by himself, or his own strength. 2. That there is no other way to do it but by Christ.

1. As for the first, we need no Divine revelation for it, for we cannot but be sensible of it ourselves. We find, we feel it by our own sad experience, that we have not strength enough in ourselves to withstand, much less to overcome the world ; but, do what we can, something or other in it will have power and dominion over us. And it is no wonder our first parents in their best state, in their full strength, were overcome by it. How then is it possible for any one now to overcome it ? I know that many, both ancient and modern philosophers, have talked very finely of vice and virtue ; but it was mere talk. When it came to the point, they were no more able of themselves to subdue the one and practise the other as they ought, than they were to remove mountains and create worlds. Indeed, our whole nature is corrupted, and all the powers of our souls are out of tune ; and therefore, our actions must needs be so, whether we see it or no. And lest we should take no notice of it ourselves, God himself hath often put us in mind

of it; assuring us, "that there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," Eccl. vii. 20; "that the wickedness of man is great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually," Gen. vi. 5; and "that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves," 2 Cor. iii. 5. And if we cannot so much as think, how can we do anything that is good of ourselves? And if we can do nothing at all, how can we do so great a thing as to overcome the whole world? No; there is no way possible for us ever to do it by our own strength.

2. But, blessed be God, he hath found out, or rather he hath made a way for us to do it; but he hath made only one way, and that is by Jesus Christ; who hath told us with his own mouth, "Without me ye can do nothing," John xv. 5; whereby he hath excluded all possibility of our overcoming the world, subduing sin, or doing anything that is good without him. To the same purpose is that of the apostle, where he saith, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12, but the name of Christ. Where, by being saved, we are not to understand, as men commonly do, only our eternal salvation in heaven, but all things necessary in order to it; and especially our being saved from our sins, from the strength as well as from the guilt of them; which we can never be any other way than by Christ: but by him we may; this being the great end wherefore he hath done and suffered so much for us. For this purpose it was that "the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. For this purpose he "gave himself

for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. For this purpose he was raised up, that he might turn every one of us from his iniquities, Acts iii. 26. For this purpose he was exalted with the right hand of God, that he might be "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. And for this purpose he ever liveth to make intercession for us, that he might be able to "save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 25. And therefore we cannot doubt but by him we may be enabled to overcome the world, and all things in it which can any way impede our salvation by him; especially considering, that although the first Adam was overcome by it, he the Second Adam hath overcome it, both for himself and us. "Be of good cheer," saith he, "I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33. So that now, under his banner, we fight against a conquered enemy, and therefore need not fear being overcome, as long as we keep close to him who hath all power given him, both in heaven and earth, and is always ready to give us as much of it as we have occasion for in any of our spiritual conflicts; insomuch that, as we can do nothing without him, there is nothing but we can do by him: as St. Paul found by experience, when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13.

II. And as no man can overcome the world but only by Christ, so no man can overcome it by him, without believing in him. That the whole of our salvation, and so this, as the main part of it, depends upon our believing in Christ, is so plain to any one that reads the gospel, that I need not insist upon it.

I shall only observe, in general, that in the verse before my text, St. John ascribes our victory over the world so entirely unto our faith, as if it was the victory itself; saying, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." St. Paul calls faith "a shield, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," Eph. vi. 16. St. Peter saith, God purifies our hearts by faith, Acts xv. 9. When Satan had desired to have the said apostle and his brethren, Christ only prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, Luke xxii. 32. And Christ himself saith expressly, that we are sanctified by faith that is in him, Acts xxvi. 18. And elsewhere he saith, that "he that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already," John iii. 18. And again, "I am come a light," saith he, "into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness," John xii. 46. And to name no more, he saith, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered," John xv. 4—6. From all which it appears, that we cannot overcome either the world or the devil; we cannot be enlightened, nor purified, nor sanctified, nor enabled to do anything that is good by Christ himself, except we believe in him; and except we so believe as to abide continually in him, as a branch doth in the vine, so as to receive nourishment and virtue from it, to bring forth fruit. It is by faith that we

are engrafted into Christ, and made members of his body, and so partake of that Holy Spirit who proceeds from him. And therefore, unless we believe in him, we can derive no power nor virtue at all from him, no more than as if there were none at all in him. When he was upon the earth, in his own country, it is said, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief," Matt. xiii. 58. And so it is to this day. The great reason why he doeth not many mighty works for us, and that we do not many mighty works by him, is merely because of unbelief. Men will not believe in him, and then it is no wonder they are never the better for him, nor able to overcome the world, and come to God by him; it being as impossible to do any good without believing on him, as it is to do it without him.

III. But then, in the last place, no man can believe in Christ for it, except he believe him to be the Son of God, of the same nature and glory with the Father. For our believing in him for power to overcome the world, necessarily implies our believing him to be both able and willing to give it us; and by consequence we trust and depend upon him for it. But this we neither ought nor can do, except we believe him to be God. We ought not to do it, because we are commanded to trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and therefore on nothing else, Prov. iii. 5. Indeed, to trust on anything besides God, is one of the greatest sins that a man can be guilty of: it is idolatry itself; it is giving that honour to a creature which is due only unto God. And yet this all are guilty of, who do not believe Christ to be God, and yet trust on him as if he was. But I think we have no great cause to fear that any,

at least considering persons, should fall into that sin. For I do not see how any man that considers what he doeth, can possibly believe and trust on Christ for anything at all, much less for his salvation, except he believe him to be the Lord God Almighty.

To make this as plain as I can, there are two things absolutely necessary to our eternal salvation, as without which we cannot be capable of it. 1. That our sins, whereby we have offended Almighty God, be all pardoned. 2. That we overcome the world, so as to be and do good in it. But we can believe in Christ for neither of these things, unless we believe him to be God.

1. As for the first, we cannot but be all sensible, that we have often broke those holy, wise, and righteous laws, which Almighty God our Maker hath prescribed to us; and that we have thereby incurred his displeasure, and made ourselves obnoxious to the death which he at first threatened, and to all the curses which he hath denounced against those who continue not in all things which he hath commanded, to do them, Gal. iii. 10; by which means, although many, by reason of the blindness and hardness of their hearts, do not or will not see it, yet we all stand upon the brink of the bottomless pit; and should God open our eyes, and show us the danger we are in, we should not be able to endure ourselves, but should be ready to sink down into horror and despair. What then shall we do? Whither shall we go for succour? Shall we go to God? It is true he is merciful,—but he is just too. And, besides, it is he whom we have offended, and therefore we cannot in reason expect any favour at his hands, no more than the fallen angels can, with-

out making him satisfaction; much less can we imagine that he should break his word for us. But shall we then go to Christ? If he be not God, what can he do for us? Can a creature appease the wrath, satisfy the justice, or defend us against the power of his and our Almighty Creator? No more than we can do it for ourselves. What if he spent his whole life in doing good? It was no more than every man is bound to do. And what though he suffered a cruel death, what is that to us? If he were a mere human person, as every one of us is, both his actions and his sufferings must needs all terminate in himself; we can be no more concerned in them, than we are in the life and death of any other great and good man; much less can all mankind be said to suffer that death in him which God hath threatened: for according to this supposition, none at all were in him, he being only a single human person of himself, as every other man is. How then can any one who doth not believe him to be God, notwithstanding believe and trust on him for the pardon of his sins, and for God's reconciliation to him? No man certainly can do it, but he who can believe impossibilities, and reconcile plain contradictions; that is, no man who hath either sense or reason.

Whereas, on the other side, he who believes Christ to be God as well as man, hath all the reason in the world to believe in him for God's mercy in the pardon of all his sins: for he being God, of the same substance with the Father, and having taken upon him not any particular human person, but the human nature in general, and united it to his own Divine person, whatever he suffered in that nature could not but have respect to all mankind, as partaking of that nature wherein he suffered: and he

who suffered in it being of infinite power and glory, his sufferings could not but be of infinite value and merit, and so fully satisfactory to the Divine justice for the sins of mankind in general: wherefore he is said to have "tasted death for every man," Heb. ii. 9, and to be made a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 1, 2. For he, the Second Adam, having suffered that death in the whole nature of man, which God had threatened to it in the first Adam, he hath thereby taken off our obligations to undergo it; and "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13; and therefore, he who believes him to be God as well as man, may well believe in him for pardon, to whom all the prophets give witness, "that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," Acts x. 43.

2. The same may likewise be said of grace and power to overcome the world, and do good. No man can believe in Christ for that either, but he who believes him to be truly God; for it is God who sanctifies us, Exod. xxxi. 13. It is God who purifies our hearts, Acts xv. 9. It is God who is the Author of every good and perfect gift, James i. 17. It is God who makes us "perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight," Heb. xiii. 21. It is God who worketh in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. In a word, it is God who is the chiefest, the only good in the world, without whom nothing can either be or do so: and therefore he who doth not believe Christ to be God, how can he believe in him for such things which none can do but only God; as the Scriptures plainly assert, and he himself also must believe, if he

believe them to be the word of God. Such a man's faith would contradict and destroy itself, and so be no longer faith, but mere fiction and fallacy. But if we believe Christ to be God, as all men ought, and have all the reason in the world to do, then we may well believe in him for grace and virtue, every thing that is necessary to our overcoming the world, and so to our being holy here, and happy for ever. We may well believe he can give it us, if he will, because he is God: and we may as well believe he will do it if he can, because he is man, and became so on purpose to qualify himself for it; that we, who can never overcome the world without him, may be enabled to do it by him, as I have shown already we may.

Wherefore, to sum up the whole argument; seeing we can never overcome the world, but only by Jesus Christ; seeing we can never do it by him, unless we believe in him; and seeing we can never believe in him, unless we believe him to be the Son of God, of the same nature with the Father: therefore we may truly say with the apostle, "Who is he that overcometh the world. but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Now, from the premises thus briefly laid down, many very useful inferences may be drawn; I shall instance at present only three.

1. From hence we may observe the absolute necessity of believing the great article of our christian religion, that upon which our whole religion is founded. —even that Jesus Christ, the Founder of it, is not only a mere man, or any other creature, but the eternal Son of God, of one substance with the Father. Wherefore, as ever ye desire to be saved, you must be sure to continue firm and stedfast in this faith.

Let not any arians, socinians, turks, or mahommedans ever seduce you from it ; and if any attempt to do it, look upon them as the devil's agents and factors, employed by him to ruin and destroy you ; for so they will certainly do, if they can ever, by his help, prevail upon you to deny the Godhead of Christ your Saviour, that being in effect to deny him to be your Saviour ; for that none can be, but only God. And if he do not save you, I am sure nobody else can.

2. In the next place, we may from hence also observe, what ground we have to believe that article of our church, which saith, " They also are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature : for holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." For to this we may add, from what we have now heard, that the same holy Scripture doth also declare, that no man can overcome the world, and so be saved by Christ himself, but he who believes him to be the Son of God. From whence it necessarily follows, that whatever law or sect a man professeth, and how diligent soever he may be to frame his life according to it, yet, unless he believes this, he cannot be saved. I know some have thought this to be very hard ; that they who never heard of Christ, and therefore cannot believe in him, should not be saved, how well soever they live : but the world is not governed by men's thoughts, but by God's will. It may seem as hard to any one who considers, that none of the apostate angels are saved. But none ever thought this to be so ; why then should they

think so of that? But let men think what they please, God hath said, "that no man can overcome the world but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God;" and therefore that must be true.

3. Lastly, from hence we may observe, what course we must take, if we desire to overcome the world, so as to get to heaven: we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, of infinite power and goodness, most perfectly able and willing to do everything for us and in us, that is in any way necessary to our salvation. And therefore, we must believe and trust on him for grace to repent of all our sins; for God's mercy in the pardoning of them; for power to overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and for such influences of his Holy Spirit, as will make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We must heartily and constantly use the means which he hath appointed for our obtaining grace and salvation; but we must keep our faith and confidence fixed upon him, and upon him only, to make them effectual to the purposes for which he hath appointed them. If we do this, as we need not, so we ought not to doubt but that he will so assist, conduct, and guide us through the whole course of our life, that at length we shall attain the end of our faith, even the eternal salvation of our souls, by him:

To whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

OF TAKING UPON US CHRIST'S YOKE.

MATTHEW xi. 29.

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, AND LEARN OF ME; FOR I AM
MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART: AND YE SHALL FIND REST
UNTO YOUR SOULS

ALTHOUGH our blessed Saviour, in the foregoing verse, promiseth rest to "those that labour and are heavy laden," if they come to him, yet we must not think that they that come to him shall have nothing to do, or that they shall rest from doing good, as well as from suffering evil. It is true, what Christ hath done and suffered for us, of itself is sufficient to expiate our sins, and to reconcile us unto God; for it was he who trod the winepress of his Father's wrath alone, no creature being in a capacity to assist him. And therefore the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons before God, must be wholly ascribed to the merit of his death and passion, nothing that we can do signifying anything at all without it. But, however, though Christ thus came to expiate, he did not come to patronize our sins; nor to die that we might still live in them. He hath freed us indeed from the curse of the law, but not from our obedience to it. He hath taken off our obligations to the punishments, but not to our observance of it; for he himself hath told us, that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil and establish them, Matt. v. 17. Hence the apostle, having proved that we are "justified by faith without the deeds of

the law," Rom. iii. 28, he presently adds, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law," Rom. iii. 31. Where we may observe, by the way, the great mistake and error of those who contend and assert, that wherever St. Paul speaks of "the deeds" or "works of the law," as having no hand in our justification, he is to be understood only of the levi- tical, or ceremonial law, not of the moral. But no- thing can be clearer than that the apostle in this place speaks only of the deeds of the moral law, saying, that we are justified by faith without them. For it is plain that he here speaks of that law which faith doth not make void, but establish: whereas it is agreed on all hands, that the ceremo- nial law is utterly abolished by the coming of Christ, and that it is the moral law only that is established by faith in him; and by consequence, that they are the deeds of the moral, not of the ceremonial law, which the apostle here excludes from our justifica- tion before God, although it be still in force as much as ever, or rather more; we having now more and stronger obligations upon us to observe it, than they had before the coming of Christ: forasmuch as we have now clearer explications of it, both by the doctrine and example of our blessed Saviour, and also greater encouragements; because we may be now assured, that how much soever we abound in the work of the law, our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Yea, and we have a promise of greater assistance now by the Spirit of God himself, which Christ will give to those that come to him; so that we have all the obligations imaginable upon us, to love and obey God, in what- ever he commands.

When Christ, therefore, promiseth to give rest to those that come unto him for it, we must still remember what kind of rest it is; not a rest in, but from their sins: he will ease them from their former yokes and burdens which they laboured under, and were overladen with; but so that they must take his easy yoke upon them, and his light burden. "Take my yoke," saith he, "upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

This, therefore, being that which our blessed Lord, from whom we expect both pardon and salvation, requires of all those that come unto him, and by consequence that expect anything from him, as I hope we all do, it must needs be a matter of very great moment and importance to us all, rightly to understand his will and pleasure in these words, and what it is that he requireth of us; which that you may do, I shall endeavour to explain them to you clearly and distinctly as they lie in order.

I. First, saith he, "Take my yoke upon you." For the opening of which words we must consider what yoke it is that he here speaks of, and how we must take it upon us.

1. As for the first, we must know that there is a threefold yoke of Christ, which all are bound to take upon them that come to him.

(1.) The yoke of his doctrine. What he hath taught we must know and believe therefore because he hath taught it. It is true, there are many things which Christ hath now revealed and discovered to us, which mankind before were either altogether ignorant of, or at the best very doubtful in, which those that come to Christ are bound to believe, upon his word or testimony, confirmed by many and real miracles,

wrought on purpose for the confirmation of them; as, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity, that there are three persons in one nature, every one of whom is God, and yet all three but one God: that the Father begat the Son, the Son was begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from both; and yet one was not before another, nor one greater than another, but all three of the self-same individual nature, glory, power, majesty, co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal to one another. And the doctrine of the incarnation; that as in the Trinity there are three persons in one nature, so in Christ there are two natures in one person, the Divine and human nature, and both in their perfection; so that he was both perfectly God, of the self-same substance with the Father, and like unto him in all things, his personal properties only excepted; and perfectly man, of the self-same substance with us, and like unto us in all things, our sinful infirmities only excepted. To which we may add the doctrine of the resurrection, which he hath so frequently and so clearly discovered; namely, that at the last day, when the Son of man shall come to judge the world, both the sea and the earth shall give up their dead; that at the sound of a trumpet, the dust of every body shall immediately gather up itself from all places whithersoever it hath been dispersed, and haste every particle of it into its proper place again, so as to make up the self-same individual body which it did before: to which the soul also being united, the same numerical persons shall be restored again, to live in happiness or misery for evermore.

Now these and such like truths, which the light of nature, as it is now clouded with sin, could never have discovered, our blessed Saviour hath so clearly

taught and revealed to us, that there is nothing in the world that we have, or can have more ground to believe, than we have to believe them. It is true, they are mysteries which our senses cannot perceive, nor reason fathom, so as to comprehend them ; yet, however, reason itself cannot but conclude them most certain, because of the infallible testimony which God himself hath given of them. So that we have more reason to believe them, than we have to believe what we see or hear : for our senses we know are fallible, and we have often found them deceive us ; but we cannot say so of God, it being impossible for him to deceive or lie. And therefore, all that reason hath to do about the mysteries which God reveals, is only to search into the grounds that we have to believe them to be revealed by God. For a Divine revelation being once proved, or supposed, reason itself requires an absolute assent unto it ; and that we concern ourselves no further about it but to believe it, because God hath revealed it, whether we understand it or not. For there are many things in natural philosophy, and geometry itself, which we know by experience, or infer from reason, to be really true and certain, though we cannot understand the reasons of them, nor imagine how they come to be so ; how much more when we speak of Divine mysteries, should we captivate our reason, and submit it wholly to the infallible testimony, which the supreme Truth hath given to them ! not believing them more nor less, because we do or do not understand them, but resolving our faith wholly and only into the testimony of God. And this is that which our blessed Lord requires of those that come unto him, saying, " Take my yoke upon you ;" whereby he enjoins us to believe what he saith, and submit to his doc-

trine, without suffering our reason any further to interpose, than only to search into the grounds and motives which we have to believe that it is his doctrine, and he hath said it; which, whoever is convinced of, must look no further, but take his word for it, and therefore believe it because he said it; yea, therefore said it, that we might believe it. And whoever dares pry too much into the secrets of God, or deny any mystery revealed in the gospel, because they, forsooth, cannot understand it, nor make their shallow apprehensions reach unto the bottom of it, they have not yet taken Christ's yoke upon them; they have not learned to submit their judgments unto his, nor to believe the gospel as they ought to do, even upon the infallible testimony and authority of him who hath revealed it.

(2.) The yoke of his discipline. For as we must believe what he hath said, only because he hath said it; so we must observe what he hath commanded, only because he hath commanded it: and as we are to believe his sayings, though they be ever so much above our reason; so are we to observe his laws, though they be ever so contrary to our temper and inclinations. And certainly, as his doctrine is the highest that ever was revealed to the sons of men, so is his discipline the strictest that we can be under. For he is so far from those horrid opinions that the libertines and antinomians would father upon him, even from indulging sin, and licensing iniquity, as his pretended vicar at Rome doth, that he requireth universal obedience, to all the moral law, in the highest manner that can possibly be expressed. Indeed, one great end of his coming into the world, was to reform and better it; and not only to satisfy for our former sins, but to show us also how to order

our future lives exactly, according to the commands of God. Hence it was that he took off those false glosses which the scribes and pharisees had put upon the moral law, making as if it required nothing but external obedience; and hath declared to the world, that each command is to be understood in its fullest latitude, and in the strictest sense that possibly can be put upon it.

Thus, in the gospel of St. Matthew, he showeth, that the sixth commandment is not only to be understood of actual murdering another, but of being angry at, or despising our brother, Matt. v. 21, 22. That the seventh commandment is to be understood, not only of adultery in the act, but even in the very thoughts, Matt. v. 27, 28. That the third commandment doth not only forbid perjury, but taking the name of God in vain, Matt. v. 33—37. That the law of retaliation, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” hath reference only to courts of judicature, but as for private persons, they ought not so much as to resist evil; but if any man would take away their coat, they should let him have their cloak also; so as never to be forward to contend with any man about the things of this world, Matt. v. 38—40; and that we do not fulfil the law by loving our friends or neighbours only, but we must love our very enemies too, Matt. v. 44. And in the next chapter he shows us, that it is not enough that a man be just and honest in his dealings, so as not to cheat others to enrich himself, but that we should be so unconcerned about the world, as not to take care or thought for the morrow, Matt. vi. 34; but that the main and only design that we carry on in this life, be to prepare for another, to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” Matt. vi. 20.

Thus I might show you all along how our Saviour himself prescribes the strictest rules, both of piety towards God, and of equity towards our neighbour, that it is possible for us to perform, or indeed for himself to prescribe; telling us in plain terms, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 20. And therefore he expects that all those that come to him, should excel, not only the more brutish and debauched part of mankind, but even the most formal hypocrites, and the highest moralists in the world, in virtue and godliness. He expects that they that name his name, and look for pardon and happiness upon his account, should shine like lights in the world; yea, so as to dazzle the eyes of all that are about them, and shame them into repentance and true conversion; that none that see them, but may know they have been with Christ, observing the excellency of his laws and discipline, in all their actions both to God and man.

But here you must give me leave to stand still and wonder; wonder, I say, what is become of christianity in the world, and into what corner of the earth it is gone! That there was such a religion established here, I verily believe, but there is little or no sign of it now amongst us. Insomuch that when I consider what Divine mysteries Christ hath revealed to us, and what strict and holy lives he requires and expects from them that profess his name, I cannot but sometimes question with myself, whether or not there be such a thing as a christian in the world. I am sure, it is very rare to find one; but why should I wonder at that, when Christ himself hath told us, that "many are called, but few

chosen," Matt. xx. 16 ; and hath told us, that his flock is " a very little flock," Luke xii. 32. However, I hope, that there are some amongst us who truly fear the Lord, and walk in his ways, turning religion neither into faction nor superstition, but sincerely endeavouring to take Christ's yoke upon them, and to observe his discipline exactly, although they be so few, so very few, that they are not discernible.

(3.) The yoke of the cross, which our Saviour hath made the badge of his disciples ; so that as the cross bore him, they must bear it, if they would manifest themselves to be his disciples. " If any man," saith he, " will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Matt. xvi. 24 ; that is, those that would go after Christ, so as to be his disciples indeed, must deny themselves whatever seems profitable or advantageous for them, whensoever it comes into competition with his interest in the world, or theirs in him ; so as to think no duty too great to undertake, no misery too heavy to undergo, so that he may be glorified by them on earth, and they may be glorified by him in heaven ; and so far from taking pleasure in sin, that it is their only trouble ; and so far from being troubled at what they suffer for Christ, that it is their great pleasure : therefore, saith St. Paul, " I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake," 2 Cor. xii. 10 ; yea, and all the apostles rejoiced " that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," Acts v. 41. Oh the excellent temper of a real christian ! who can not only trample upon the seeming greatness, but also upon the very briers and thorns of this present world, with pleasure and delight ! Looking upon it, not as his misery, but his

happiness and honour, to suffer reproaches, troubles, yea, death itself for Christ, who suffered infinitely more for us than we can do for him; as reckoning with St. Paul, that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 18.

And verily, it is no wonder that those who come to Christ take this yoke upon them, so as to reckon that they can lose nothing for him, as knowing they have all things in him. Neither properly can it be counted misery, which is both accompanied with and leadeth to the highest happiness imaginable, even the love and favour of Almighty God; which being the only object of their soul's desires who come to Christ, they cannot but esteem themselves happy in attaining it, whatever it costs them. Or however, those who come to him, so as to be his disciples, cannot expect to fare better in the world than he their Lord and Master did; and therefore should prepare themselves beforehand, and resolve to take upon them not only the yoke of his doctrine, so as to believe what he hath taught, and the yoke of his discipline, so as to observe what he hath commanded, but the yoke of his cross too, so as to bear whatever he shall see good to lay upon them, in order to his present and their future glory.

Neither is it sufficient thus to take the yoke of Christ upon you, but you must do it too with that willingness, alacrity, and patience, which he requires you. So that you must not only make his religion, that he hath taught you, your business, but your choice and recreation too; and so resign and submit your wills to his, as to be as ready to do or suffer anything that he requires, as he is pleased to require it. For, to speak home unto you, if you expect to

be pardoned and saved by him, he expects to be served and honoured by you ; yea, he expects that you should be wholly his ; and, by consequence, should live as those who are none of your own, but being bought with a price, yea, so high a price as his most precious blood, you should glorify him both in your souls and bodies, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20 ; and therefore, you do in vain profess to be his disciples, and to trust on him for pardon and salvation, unless you submit your necks to his yoke, and cheerfully both do and suffer whatsoever he shall see good to lay upon you.

But then, you will say, what benefit shall we have by coming unto Christ ? for it seems, though he take one yoke off, he will put another upon us ; and so we shall not be freed from our troubles under which we laboured and were heavy laden, but only exchange one sort of trouble for another. It is true, Christ will not ease you of all your troubles, so as to live for the future without care and trouble in the world ; yet the benefit that you receive by coming to him is far greater than I am able to express : for the burden which he frees you from is altogether intolerable, so that you are not able to bear it without sinking under it into the bottomless pit of eternal horror and confusion ; whereas the trouble he puts you to, is, in its own nature, nothing else but the work that you were made for, and so is indeed your real happiness, or what tends unto it : so that there is nothing of real trouble in it, but only as your corrupt fancies imagine it to be so ; because it is contrary to your sinful temper and inclinations. Hence our Saviour himself here tells you that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light, Matt. xi. 30 ; that is, there is nothing at all of difficulty in the bearing of

it, if our minds be but rightly inclined to it. And upon this account too it is that St. John saith, that "his commandments are not grievous," 1 John v. 3: they may be grievous to flesh and blood, but not to one that is really Christ's disciple; because such a one cannot but in his judgment esteem it to be his honour, and by his experience find it to be his happiness, as well as duty, to observe and obey whatever he who made and redeemed him is pleased to require of him.

Thus I have shown you your Saviour's mind and meaning in saying, "Take my yoke upon you;" what now remains but that you do it? I know you all expect and desire to be saved, and believe that "there is no other name given under heaven whereby you can be saved, but the name of Christ:" but now you see what Christ himself, that came to save you, expects from you, in order to his saving of you, even that you take his yoke upon you. Let me, therefore, beseech you in his name, that as you outwardly profess to believe in him, so you would endeavour sincerely to obey him; devote yourselves to his service, and adjust your lives to his commands; believe what he hath told you; perform what he hath enjoined you; submit to what he imposeth on you; take his yoke upon you, and learn of him to be meek and lowly, and he himself hath assured you, that "ye shall find rest unto your souls."

2. Now, it being so necessary for all those who come to Christ, and expect anything from him, to take his yoke upon them, our Saviour here, in the next place, shows how we may do it, even if we do but learn of him, especially in being meek and lowly. "And learn of me," saith he; implying, that he requires nothing of us but what himself hath done before us.

And if we would but walk in his steps, and write after his copy, our work was done; for he requires no more of us but to do as he did. It is none but his own yoke that he would have us take upon us, that which he himself had borne before us, and for us too. "Take my yoke upon you," saith he, "and learn of me:" as if he should have said, I am your Lord and Master, you profess yourselves to be my scholars and disciples; and if you would carry and behave yourselves as becomes my disciples, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, so as to practise what I teach you, both by my precept and example.

From whence we may observe, that all who profess to believe in Christ, and expect happiness and salvation from him, should endeavour to walk as he walked, and in all their actions imitate the pattern which he hath set them, as St. Paul did, 1 Cor. xi. 1. And verily, could we do this, how holy, how happy should we be! For questionless, as never man spake as Christ spake, so never man lived as he lived; he being the only person that ever lived on earth who did no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile, 1 Pet. ii. 22. Indeed, his whole man was so pure, so perfect, that there was not the least spot or blot either in his soul or body: there was no darkness in his mind, no error in his judgment, no vanity in his thoughts, no perverseness in his will, no pride in his spirit, no malice in his heart, no irregularity, no disorder in all his affections; and, therefore, no wonder that there was never an idle word heard come from him, nor any sort of an unseemly action performed by him. Neither was he only thus free from evil, but fraught with good. Indeed, his whole life was but as one continued act of religion and charity; for, as the apostle tells us, he "went about

doing good," Acts x. 38. Wherever he came, you still find him either praying, or preaching, or dispersing his miraculous charity and goodness amongst the people: sometimes giving eyes to the blind, and legs unto the lame; sometimes health to the sick, and life to the dead; always doing some good act or other for God or men: insomuch, that there is no grace, no virtue whatever, but what he hath given us an exact pattern and example of. I need not instance in particulars: his life, no less than four times, and by four several writers infallibly recorded, doth sufficiently attest how courteous he was in his carriage, how patient under his sufferings, how content with his condition, how compassionate to the miserable, how charitable to the poor, how submissive to his parents, how loving and just to all. And if we speak of his behaviour towards God, nothing that he did all his life long, but doth clearly manifest his extraordinary love to him, extraordinary trust on him, extraordinary zeal for him, extraordinary submission to him, and extraordinary diligence and care to reveal his will, advance his glory, and propagate his interests among the sons of men.

And certainly, whatever our Saviour, as man, did, he therefore did it, that we by him might learn how to do it. But of all those excellent and divine graces that his blessed soul was endowed, and his life adorned with, the principal thing that he would have us to learn of him, is to be meek and lowly in heart: "Learn of me," saith he, "for I am meek and lowly in heart:" not learn of me to work miracles, to heal the sick, or raise the dead; not learn of me to turn water into wine, or to make a few loaves to suffice thousands; but learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart.

II. This, therefore, being the great lesson which our blessed Lord and Master would have us learn of him, I shall endeavour at this time to teach you how to learn it.

1. First, therefore, as for his meekness, it was so remarkable and extraordinary in him, that all the affronts and injuries which he daily received could never move him to anger: and though he was often sorrowful, and sometimes wept; yet as he is never said to have laughed, so neither was he ever angry but once, and that was upon a just occasion, when the pharisees upbraided him for doing good upon the sabbath-day; then, indeed, he is said to have looked on them with anger, "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts," Mark iii. 5: so that he was angry at them not for any injury which they offered to him, but for the injury which they did themselves by their unbelief, and the hardness of their hearts. But when himself was only concerned, how reproachfully soever they spake against him, how cruelly soever they used him, his meek and serene spirit was never moved or disturbed at it.

Moses, indeed, hath the testimony of God himself, that he was the "meekest man upon the face of the earth;" yet the Israelites "provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips," Psa. cvi. 33: but in this our blessed Saviour incomparably excelled Moses, being of that rare temper, that gentle nature, that meek and mild disposition, that all the injuries which the malice of men or devils conspired to heap upon him, could never exert a rash, angry, or inconsiderate word from him. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to God that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," Isa. liii. 7. Thus when his own disciple betrayed him into the hands of his enraged enemies, with an hypocritical and dissembling kiss, all that he replied was only, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Luke xxii. 48. And when the malicious multitude, that thirsted after his blood, had now got him into their hands, and his disciples making some small resistance, one "of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear;" he was so far from being discomposed, or disturbed in his mind by any unruly and revengeful passion, that he wrought a miracle to restore and heal it, Luke xxii. 51. Yea, and when his hands and feet were fastened to the cross with nails drove through them, those very sharp and exquisite pains, which racked and tortured his whole body, could not in the least exasperate or provoke his soul against them that did it: yea, so far was he from being angry with them himself, that he prayed to his Father that he would not be angry with them either; in the midst of all his torments crying out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 34.

Now, as your Lord and Master carried himself to his, so he expects that you do the like towards your enemies; even that you learn of him to be meek and gentle to those also that will not be so to you. For he would have you do as he did; live above the world, so as to contemn both all the overtures that it can make, and all the injuries that it can do unto you; otherwise you can never enjoy him, nor yourselves neither. "In your patience," saith he,

“possess ye your souls,” Luke xxi. 19; implying, that when a man is impatient under any trouble, and incensed against the instruments of it, he is at present besides himself; he doth not enjoy or possess his own soul, but is strangely transported into a kind of frenzy, which makes him incapable, while it lasts, of using his reason, or exerting the several faculties of his soul as he ought to do. And I suppose there are none here present that indulge this passion, but find by experience how unfit it makes them for temporal, much more for spiritual employments: and I am sure, by giving way to this passion, we do ourselves more hurt than it is possible for any one else to do us; for hereby we deprive ourselves of our very selves, and suffer that fire to be kindled in our breasts, which, if not timely prevented, will break out into an open flame, and burn up and destroy both soul and body.

And therefore, if any of you desire to carry yourselves like christians, or to be happy even in this life, you must be sure to keep down this turbulent and unruly passion; and if at any time, through surprise or inadvertency, it begin to rise, be sure to nip it in the bud. If you do not conquer it at first, it will conquer you at last; and so occasion you misery in this, as well as in the world to come. Whereas, could you always keep your spirits calm, and your soul serene, in the midst of those various storms and tempests you meet with here below, whatever may be without, there will still be happiness and tranquillity within; yea, our Saviour himself hath pronounced such to be blessed. “Blessed,” saith he, “are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,” Matt. v. 5. “The meek shall inherit the earth,” saith David, “and shall delight themselves in th-

abundance of peace," Psa. xxxvii. 11. And as to be of such a composed, sedate, meek, and gentle temper, is advantageous to ourselves, so is it very acceptable unto God; for "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. iii. 4. It is an ornament, yea an ornament of great price, and that in the esteem of God himself; and therefore, if you would live quietly within yourselves, or acceptably towards God, you must use all means imaginable to suppress this troublesome and mischievous passion of anger and malice, and learn of Christ your Master to be meek.

"And lowly in heart:" which is the next particular virtue which our Saviour would have us learn of him; who certainly hath given us the highest example of it that ever was, or ever can be set before us. It was an eminent instance of his humility, that he, being the immortal God, should condescend so much as to become a mortal man; that eternity should stoop to time, heaven bow down to earth; he who made the world be born into it, and the Creator of all things become himself a creature. Who is able to think of it without astonishment, or to speak of it without adoration! that He, "who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God," should make himself of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant, and be made in the likeness of men, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Oh mystery of mysteries! who is able to dive into the bottom of this Divine humility! And yet, as if this had not been enough, this infinite and all-glorious Person did not only become man, but one of the meanest of men; not only a servant, but the servant of servants. For though he had thousands of glorious saints and angels to minister to him in heaven, he came down

that himself might minister to the unworthiest of all creatures, even to men on earth ; for, as he himself saith, " the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," Matt. xx. 28. Indeed, although he was the supreme Governor and Disposer of all things in the world, yet when he was here below, he chose nothing for himself out of all things which he had, but the lowest and meanest that could be imagined. His mother, whom he chose to be born of, was none of the greatest ladies of the world, but a poor virgin, fit to be spouse to no greater person than a carpenter. And though all the palaces in the earth were his, yet he chose to be born in a stable, where he had no other cradle but a manger. And though, while a child of twelve years old, he knew who he was, and whence he came, as appears from his answer to his mother, saying, " Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? "—yet however he humbly submitted, and was subject to his mother and the honest carpenter to whom she was espoused, and followed his trade, which, as some of the ancients assert, was principally to make ploughs and yokes ; and in this despicable and poor condition the King of glory himself lived until he was about thirty years of age ; and when he appeared upon the stage of the world, though all the world was his, yet he had not one foot of land in all the world, for " he had not where to lay his head," Luke ix. 58. Neither did he choose to converse with the rich and learned part of the world, but a company of poor and simple fishermen were his continual associates. After which time he was so far from being honoured or respected of men, and from aspiring after the applause, or enjoying the pleasures of the world, that he was a man of

sorrows, and acquainted with grief; he was derided, spit upon, accused, arraigned, condemned by those very persons who could not pronounce the sentence against him, had not he himself vouchsafed them breath to do it; nor have moved either hand or tongue against him, had not he assisted them. And after all this, he submitted to the most vile, most painful, and most ignominious death that could possibly be inflicted upon the basest of men; being crucified betwixt two malefactors, persons justly condemned to die for their atrocious crimes and villainies: and thus, as he came into the world, so he went out again, in the lowest and meanest manner that possibly he could.

Oh wonder of wonders! that highness itself should become thus lowly, glory and excellency itself thus humble! But tell me then, shall the glorious God of heaven himself become thus humble and lowly; and shall we poor mortals upon earth be proud? Shall beauty, glory, majesty, supereminency itself, think no place too mean, no work too low, no service too contemptible, no death too vile for him; and is it possible for such mean, such low, such despicable, such vile, and altogether worthless creatures as we are; is it possible, I say, that we should talk of our honour and dignity, that we should think every thing below us, or that we should be arrogant and conceited of what we have or do! What, poor and proud too! Shall He who had all things, be proud of nothing; and shall we who have nothing, be proud of all things? What a strange thing is the heart of man become, that was at first so composed, that nothing but infinite goodness itself could fill it; and now the least blast of wind, yea, vanity itself, immediately swells and puffs it up!

And let me tell you, whatever other sins many of you may be free from, I fear there are few, or none, but are guilty of this. But I cannot but sometimes wonder with myself, what it is that men or women are so generally proud of: is it the largeness of your estate, the fulness of your trade, or the greatness of your credit in the world? Is it the proportion of your bodies, the comeliness of your features, or the applause and honour which you have from others, that you are proud of? But if you be proud of these things, you are proud indeed, but it is of nothing: for these things have no real being in the world, nor any other existence, but only in your own corrupt and deluded fancies. It is true, silver and gold are things, but they are not riches, unless you think them so. The same may be said of beauty, which we may shut our eyes against, and wink into blackness and deformity. And as for honour and applause, that is a mere chimera, a dream, a shadow, a very, very nothing; which philosophy itself, as well as theology, could never yet define or describe, either its nature, or its seat, what or where it is. And, though these things may seem paradoxes to you, yet your Saviour knew them to be real truths; and therefore, you never find him any more desirous of, or concerned about those things, than as if there were no such things in the world, as really there are not. When he had taken our nature upon him, he came in and went out of the world again, without ever taking notice of those things, unless it was to reprove men for doting on them. He could see nothing upon earth to be proud of; and therefore, though all things were at his service and command, yet he was not only humble himself, but hath enjoined all his disciples to be so too.

Hence, therefore, if any of you desire to be christians indeed, the first lesson that you must learn of your Lord and Master, is to be "meek and lowly;" still remembering that you can never think too highly of God, nor too lowly of yourselves. It is for men in Bedlam to please themselves with feathers, to think their prison to be a palace, and their chains to be badges of honour; and so to pride themselves in the vain imaginations of their own distracted fancies. As for such amongst you who are come unto yourselves, and, by consequence, unto Christ too, you should carry yourselves like men of wisdom and understanding, that know you have many things to be humbled for, but nothing in the world to be proud of: and therefore, however you are in others', you are still to be vile and base in your own eyes; looking upon yourselves as less than the least of all God's mercies, and greater than the greatest of all sinners. And let me tell you, the lower you are in your own, the higher you will be in God's esteem; "for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," Luke xiv. 11; "for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," 1 Pet. v. 5. So that he who is clothed with humility need not fear but he shall be adorned with all true grace and virtue whatever: and Christ himself hath here promised, that such amongst you as are meek and lowly shall find rest to your souls.

III. And so I come to the last thing to be explained in few terms, even what is that "rest" here spoken of. In general, it is rest for our souls, and that both in this, and also in the world to come. First, even in this life: those who take Christ's yoke upon them, and are "meek and lowly in heart,"

find unspeakable rest, quiet, and satisfaction in their souls, from the very performance of those duties, and the exercise of those graces, which Christ requireth of them; insomuch, that however their outward condition be, there cannot but be calmness and tranquillity within. For the soul being made on purpose to love, honour, and obey its Maker, it was so composed; that it cannot but be impatient, restless, and unquiet, whilst it is doing anything else but what it was designed for. And therefore, as the Lord himself hath told us, "There is no peace unto the wicked:" neither indeed can be; their wickedness itself raising an intestine war in their own bowels, which bears down all before it, and keeps the soul in a continual hurry and confusion. Whereas, one that is constant and conscientious in doing what God requires of him, cannot but find a secret kind of peace and satisfaction within himself, arising from the apprehensions that he hath done his duty, and pleased God that made him: which is certainly the highest happiness that we can attain to upon earth, and an earnest of that everlasting rest which we expect in heaven; where we shall rest from our troubles, which shall no more befall us; rest from our fears, which shall no more seize on us; rest from sin, which shall no more be in us; rest from Satan, who shall no more come near us; yea, we shall rest from all our labours, and our works shall follow us, Rev. xiv. 13. Oh glorious rest! when we shall not only rest from whatever is evil, but rest in Him who is the chiefest good; where we shall be infinitely more happy than here we can be: when our souls shall solace themselves in the embraces of love itself, and rest in the centre of all perfections. When all the faculties of our souls, and

members of our bodies, shall be restored to their primitive frame and constitution; and so our whole man shall be capable of perfectly beholding, admiring, and enjoying beauty, glory, and goodness itself. This, therefore, is the accomplishment of that rest, which they shall find to their souls, who take Christ's yoke upon them, and learn of him to be meek and lowly.

Thus I have done my duty in explaining these words of our blessed Lord unto you; yours now begins, which is, to put them into practice. I know you all hope and desire to be saved by Christ; but I beseech you to consider, upon what terms you can be saved by him. For here you see, that this very Person, from whom you expect salvation, hath strictly enjoined you, in order to it, to take his yoke upon you, and to learn of him to be meek and lowly. So that you must make him the pattern of your lives here, or else you cannot expect that he should be the portion of your souls hereafter; unless you follow him in the ways of holiness upon earth, you cannot come to him in heaven. And, therefore, let me advise you to go home, and bethink yourselves of the Saviour's words, and what you have heard upon them; and if you care not whether you be saved or not, think of them no more; but if you do, follow his directions: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

AN EXHORTATION TO THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTHEW xxii. 37.

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART,
AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND.

LET me now bespeak your affection for the Lord your God ; not the love you have for other things, but a love above all things. Gather up your scattered affections from all things here below, and place them upon Him who made them. Put him not off any longer with overpowered passions, but love him most whom, be sure, you can never love too much : no, never fear excess in your love to God, which is capable of no other extreme, but only of defect. In other things, mediocrity is a virtue, but here it is a vice ; for we must love him exceedingly, or we cannot love him truly : so that the only measure of our loving him, is to love him without measure ; and, therefore, he that thinks he loves God enough, doth not love him at all. In creature comforts our affections may grow excessive, and our love exorbitant ; but the transcendent perfections that reside in God, render him so incapable of being loved too much, that the highest passions that we can raise up to him, are still infinitely below what he deserves from us. No ; take it for certain truth, you can never love the world too little, nor God too much. Our love to other things is like other rivers, the best when it keeps within its bounds ; but our

love to God is like the river Nile, in Egypt, most welcome when it overflows. Bridle, therefore, your passions to the creatures, but let them run loose to their Creator: never fear loving him too much, seeing the highest of your passions is no more than finite; whereas the lowest of his perfections is no less than infinite. You can never love God more than you ought, and therefore love him as much as you can.

Where, when I say, you must always love him, I do not mean as if you should have some love for him, as well as for other things, but that you should have more love for him than all things; for that is not accounted as love to God, which is either surpassed or equalled with our love to the creatures: and, therefore, whensoever you hear me mention "loving of God," you must still apprehend me speaking of such a love to him as exceeds and outstrips our love to all things besides; for we love God no more, than we love him more than all things else. He who loves God no more than other things, loves the other things more than God; for he hath no love for God at all, because he doth not love him above all. For I say again, we have no more love for him, than we have love for him above all other things: so long as our love is matched or overtopped with our love to other things, we may love the other things, but we do not love God; but the least degree of our love to God more than to all things else, makes it to be true and acceptable love to him. Some may love God many degrees beyond all things else, others few; and so one man may have more love to God than another, but he who loveth him never a degree beyond all things else, he hath no love for him at all. And, therefore, I say again,

when you hear me advising you “to love God,” I would have you all along remember, I mean only such a love to him, as surmounts and exceeds your affections to all things in the world besides. This is the love that God requires of us, and this is the love that we owe to God; this, therefore, is the love that I counsel you all, as you will answer it at the dreadful day of judgment, to fix upon the great God. It is too long already that you have loved other things more than God; now, for shame, begin to love God more than all other things.

Oh, therefore, that I knew what words to take unto myself, that whilst I am speaking, this sacred fire may kindle in all your souls, that you may no longer commit sacrilege in robbing God of that which he hath commanded you to appropriate to himself. I know your affections are so glued to the world, that it is not in the power of man to rend them hence, much less is it within the reach of human strength to raise them up from earth to heaven, and from sin to God. But I know also, it is by such counsels, commands, and exhortations to you, that God is pleased to work this, and all other graces in you; it is by his ministers that he useth to strike this sacred fire out of your flinty hearts. To raise up, therefore, your affections to the most high God, give me leave to present some motives to you; and the Lord, of his infinite mercy, be pleased to work them upon you, that whilst you hear the voice of your fellow-creature sounding in your ears, you may feel the power of your great Creator reaching to your hearts, wrenching your affections from all things here below, and mounting them up unto himself above.

Well, then, what motives shall I use to prevail upon you? Verily, my brethren, whilst I consider

what considerations to lay before you, to blow up your affections unto God, there are so many crowd themselves into my busy thoughts, to be presented unto yours, that I scarce know where to begin ; and when I have begun, I fear I shall scarce know where to end. I cannot look upon you, as being in this place, but I must tell you, you are bound to love the great God for it ; for had not he loved you, you would not have been in God's house, but the devil's dungeon at this very moment. And certainly his love to you may well deserve your love to him ; nay, I cannot send mine eye any way, but it still brings me in new motives to love God. If I look above me, there are the heavens which he hath made for our future happiness ; if beneath me, there is the earth he hath made for our present abode ; if about me, there are the creatures he hath made for our use and comfort, all calling upon us to love that God who made them ; nay, verily, my very calling upon you to love God, is a mercy for which you are bound to love him ; and the more I call upon you to love him, the more you are bound to love him for my calling upon you. Nay, to speak plainly, if there be ever a soul in the congregation who loves God, let me tell thee thou art bound to love him more for thy loving him at all ; so that not only his love to thee, but thy love to him, should stir up in thee still greater affections for him. For assure thyself thou art infinitely engaged to him for thy loving of him, as well as for his loving of thee ; for had he not first loved thee, thou couldst never have loved him.

Thus, I say, I can fix mine eyes upon nothing, but it supplies me with fresh motives to love God : but, for my more orderly presenting them unto your thoughts, I shall digest them all into two heads

endeavouring to raise up your affections unto God from the consideration,

I. Of the properties of that love we ought to have for God.

II. Of the perfections of that God we ought to love.

I. From the properties of the love we owe to God. And certainly, did we but know what it was to love God experimentally, as well as notionally, we should find there is greater happiness to be enjoyed in the performance of this one duty, than in all the enjoyments which this world can afford us. Give me leave to show you some of the rare properties of this Divine love.

1. It is the first and the great commandment, Matt. xxii. 38.

(1.) In order; for this is the first of all the ten commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," Exod. xx. 3; which is as much as if he should have said, Thou shalt love nothing as God before me, worship nothing as God before me, serve nothing as God before me; nay, thou shalt not so much as have any other gods before me. Whereas it is plain, that he who loves anything more than God, or doth not love God more than all things, he hath, and loveth, other gods before Jehovah; for whatever a man loves, and prefers before other things, that is his god. Thus, a voluptuous person is said to make his belly his god, Phil. iii. 19, because he minds his belly before all things else; and therefore is covetousness called idolatry, Col. iii. 5, because the covetous man minds and loves his riches more than all things else: and the reason is, because it is to God only to whom we owe the choicest of our affections. And, therefore, whatever we love most, to that we give what is proper and peculiar to

the god ; and so, though it be not a god in itself, yet we make it one in our esteem : and, therefore, every one who loves anything more than Jehovah, hath other gods before him. Know ye then, of a certainty, that every soul amongst you who loves anything more than God, or doth not love God more than all things, is a cursed idolater : thou worshippest a false, instead of a true God. Dost thou, therefore, love riches more than God ? it is the mammon of unrighteousness that is thy God. Is it pleasures thou lovest more than God ? then pleasures are thy God. Is it thy husband or wife thou lovest more than God ? then it is thy husband or wife that is thy god. Is it thy children, thy liberty, thy health, thy credit, thy sins, thy life, that thou lovest more than the great God ? these, these are thy gods, these are the deities thou worshippest ! Wonder no longer at the Persians for adoring the sun ; wonder not at the Hindoos for worshipping stocks and stones ; wonder not at the American Indians for falling down to Satan, nor at the papists for bowing to images ; but wonder, O wonder, at thyself, who worshippest thyself, and lovest thine own concerns before the great God ! O, my brethren ! that you would bethink yourselves, what gross and cursed idolaters you all are, so long as you love anything more than God. It is love that is the principal worship of the God of heaven, and this you give to the toys on earth. O, consider with yourselves ! What, love pleasures more than God ! honours more than God ! riches more than God ! relations more than God ! liberty more than God ! life, or anything, more than God ! Thou shameful idolater, call thyself no longer christian, lay aside thy professions, pretend not to be a worshipper of the true God, so long as thou

worshippest so many false ones before him. Oh, cursed apostasy! that we, who give our names in baptism unto God, would now give our souls to the devil, our love to the world, our affections to sin; who, instead of turning, with the Thessalonians, from idols unto God, 1 Thess. i. 9, turn, with the Hindoos, from God to idols; instead of leaving the world to cleave to God, we leave God to cleave to the world. Give me leave to use the apostle's exhortation, now I am preaching to you christians, as well as if I was preaching to the idolatrous heathens: Brethren, "keep yourselves from idols," 1 John v. 21. Oh! keep yourselves from idols, from idol-riches, from idol-honours, from idol-lust, from idol-self. Oh! turn from these and all other idols, to serve the living and true God: remember it is the first command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" which, in effect, is as much as to say, Thou shalt love nothing more than me.

(2.) In dignity; as it hath the first place, so hath it the best Being for its immediate object. In the other commands, some of them respect God's name, others his worship, others his sabbaths, others his people, but this respects his person; and, therefore, it is the most proper and peculiar worship that we can perform unto him. And, therefore, as ever you desire not only to forsake your false gods, but to worship the true one, you must love him above all things: all other worship is but in reference unto this, and signifies nothing at all without it. It is true, praying, and reading, and hearing, and receiving of the sacrament, and the like, are all parts of God's worship; but, alas! this is only the body; it is love to God that is the soul of worship: and these external performances before God are no further

any true worship of him, than as they have respect unto, and terminate in true love unto him, which indeed is the end of all ordinances. Why do you pray, but that you may love God? Why hear, but to love God? Why receive the sacrament, but to love God more? It is the love of God that is the great end of all these duties, and therefore it is the most proper and immediate worship that we can perform to God. And therefore, St. Augustine, speaking of these words, in his tenth book, "*De Civitate Dei*," saith, "What is here commanded but to love God? This is the worship of God, this is true religion, this is right piety, this is the service due only unto God." And therefore, ye in vain pretend to be religious, or to worship the true God, unless you love him above all things. This is the worship that he requireth from you, and this is the worship that you owe to him; do this, and then you serve the true God; leave this undone, and do what you will besides, you are still idolaters; for it is first,

(3.) In performance. A man can perform no other command until he first perform this. Thou canst not pray, nor read, nor hear, nor give alms; thou canst do nothing as thou oughtest to do, unless thou first lovest God: for there is nothing good, but what proceeds from love to the chiefest Good; nothing is accepted by God, but what is grounded upon love to him. Thou mayest pray thy tongue, and hear thy ears to the very stumps; thou mayest fast thy body into a skeleton, and make thy couch to swim continually in thy tears; thou mayest bestow thy estate wholly upon the poor, and give thy body to be burned; thou mayest live like an angel, and die like a serpent; yet, let me tell thee, without love to

God, it signifies nothing. Thy tears will be all rejected, thy prayers slighted, thy alms despised, and all thy performances disregarded, as things nothing worth, unless they proceed from love to God: and therefore, saith the apostle, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," 1 Cor. xiii. 1. What charity doth he speak of? Certainly love, or charity to God, and for God's sake to men; without this, thou mayest fill the air with sighs, the heavens with groans, the sea with tears, and yet find no favour or acceptance in the sight of God: no, thou must first love him above all things, before thou canst do anything pleasing to him; not only because all the duties to him cannot be equivalent to the one horrid sin thou committest against him, in loving other things before him, but also because it is this love to God only that performs all other duties; without which God will never smell a sweet savour from them. What, therefore, though thou prayest? What, though thou redest? What, though thou hearest? What, though thou comest to church? What, though thou performest all other duties to God? If thou omittest this, thou hadst as good do nothing; for there is not a duty thou performest without this, that there is anything of good, but a great deal of evil in it. Oh! therefore, as ever you desire to do anything pleasing unto God, you must first love him above all things. There is not the greatest duty, but without this will certainly be rejected; and there is not the least, but with it will certainly be accepted.

2. It is the greatest too, as well as the first commandment. For,

(1.) It is that to which all the rest tend. This is, as it were, the sea into which the other commands, as the lesser rivers, do all empty themselves. Not as if, in respect of the Lawgiver, one is greater than another, for the same God commanded them all; but because all the rest are but, as it were, so many branches of this: so that there is not any of the rest but tend to the advancement of this. And therefore we cannot perform any other commands aright, unless our eye be fixed upon this.

(2.) It is that under which the rest are all contained; so that a man who doth not love God, can do nothing; whilst he who doth love God, doth all things that are required of him: for, as the apostle saith, "All the law," to wit, of the second table, "is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Gal. v. 14. So we may well say, All, both law and gospel, is fulfilled in this one word, Thou shalt love the Lord above thyself, and all things else. So he who doth not perform this one command, cannot perform the other; but he who performeth this, cannot but perform the rest.

(3.) It is that in which they all end. Praying and hearing, repenting and faith, and hope and sorrow, yea, all the other commands, will end with this, and so resolve themselves into this one, which shall never end; for "charity never faileth," 1 Cor. xiii. 8. And therefore it is said, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity," ver. 13: because this is that in which the other are contained; and this is that which will continue when the other have all ceased.

3. Consider, that love to God will make all other duties easy. To him that doth not love God, the easiest duty is difficult; to him that doth love him,

the most difficult duty is easy. For love is of that quality, that it makes us divest ourselves of our former selfishness, and to be inconsiderate of our own concerns, in comparison of his we love. How do inflamed lovers lay aside the thoughts of health, of quiet, liberty, life, and anything, for the enjoyment and pleasing of the party they love ! It is so in temporals, and certainly then much more in spirituals. If thy heart be set upon God, thou wilt think nothing too great for him, no duty too great to undertake, no misery too heavy to undergo, for him whom thy soul loveth. Thus the spouse in the Canticles, her soul being inflamed with love to Christ, she forgets her rest, her sleep, her ease, her quiet, to find him she loved ; she sought him upon her bed, in the streets, in the broad way, everywhere to find him, Sol. Song iii. 1, 2. And so thou, if thou dost indeed love God, wilt count all things as loss, and dross, and dung, in comparison of him : friends, relations, estates, preferments, health, strength, liberty, life, thou wilt look upon these things as not worthy to come into competition with God. And therefore, thou wilt not balk the least duty imaginable, for the attainment of the highest glory conceivable. What is the reason you are so loath to pray, loath to hear, loath to read the Scriptures, loath to give alms, loath to repent, and loath to perform other duties ? And what is the reason you are so backward to these duties, and these duties are so hard to you ? Why, the reason is, because you do not love God. If you loved him, it would not be your trouble, but your joy, to come before him. Thus David, " I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord," Psa. cxxii. 1. " For a day in thy courts is better

than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," Psa. lxxxiv. 10. Thus will it be with thee, though perhaps, now that thou hast no love but hatred for God, thou thinkest it tedious and irksome to pray and hear, and sit so long in the house of God; but let me tell thee, if ever God be pleased to raise up thy affections to himself, the hardest duty will be as easy as ever the easiest duty was hard unto thee; thou wilt take as much, yea, more delight, in drawing nigh unto God, than ever thou didst in running from him. And therefore, if ever thou wouldst have the paths of wisdom pleasant, the ways of holiness delightsome to thee, thou must endeavour to get thy heart emptied of its love to sin, which as yet it is filled with, and filled with the love of God, of which as yet it is empty.

4. If thou lovest God, all things shall work together for thy good, Rom. viii. 28. So long as thou lovest anything more than God, there is not the best of thy seeming goods, but are real evils to thee; whereas if thou lovest him above all things, there is not the worst of thy seeming evils but shall be real goods unto thee. Oh! then, who would love anything more than God, to have his mercies turned into miseries? Who would not love God more than all things, to have his miseries turned into mercies?

5. It is the work of angels, and the happiness of heaven. This is that crown of glory we all expect to have set upon our heads, when we arrive at our Father's kingdom; gold and silver there is none, but joy and love to God. Oh! how shall our hearts be transported with it! And certainly, for all the low conceits that you and I may have of true love to God, certainly the angels and glorified

saints find it to be the richest treasure in all their kingdoms : so that if you love God, you may antedate heaven, and bring down those joys to you, before God takes you up to them.

6. Love to God is the best evidence of our title to the crown of glory. If there be any flaw or defect in your love to God, all your other evidences will be of no force ; but if thy love to God be true and cordial, thou hast as sure a title to the joys of heaven, as thou hast to thy estate upon earth : and thou hast never an evidence that can more firmly prove thy interest in what thou hast here, than true love to God will evidence thy title to what thou hopest for hereafter. For if thy love to God be true love, thy other graces are all true graces : thy repentance is true repentance, thy faith is true faith, thy humility is true humility ; and if thy graces be true on earth, thy glory must needs be great in heaven. And, therefore, if you would know whether or not you have any title to heaven, consider what love you have to God on earth. And assure thyself, when thou and I shall be summoned at the grand assize to bring in our evidences for the kingdom of heaven, whatever evidences we bring, unless we bring this, even love to God above all things, the rest will all signify nothing : this one evidence is enough without all other ; and all other are nothing without this.

7. Love God truly above all things here, and thou shalt enjoy all things perfectly in God hereafter, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Let him have the principal room in thy heart on earth, and thou shalt have a principal room in his house in heaven : let thy heart be wholly set upon him in time, and thy soul shall be certainly blessed in him to eternity. Oh ! therefore, as ever you desire to be lifted up to the height

of happiness, rather than thrown down into the depth of misery, when you die, love nothing more than God, but God more than all things whilst you live.

II. Secondly, from the perfections of that God, whom we ought to love. Now, there are two things, you know, in a person, which draw our affections to him :

1. His love to us.

2. His loveliness in himself.

And certainly, if you and I could fix our contemplations upon the infinite expressions of God's love to us, and the infinite perfections of his loveliness in himself, we should be as unable to keep off our affections from him, as we are now unable to draw them, and raise them up to him. Well, give me leave to be your remembrancer this evening, of what God hath done for you, and of what he is in himself; and that if after all that I shall say, you are still resolved to love yourselves, your health, your wealth, your sins, your lusts, your life, or anything more than God, for my part, I shall almost despair of ever being an instrument of good to your souls more : for if such considerations as these are, even of what God is in himself, and of what he hath been to you, will not prevail upon you to leave doting upon toys, and to "love the Lord your God with all your hearts," for my part I know not what others can. Well then,

1. First, consider God's love to you, or how much you are engaged to him from what he hath done for you. But before I make a further progress into this consideration, it will be first necessary to remove a stumbling-block which lies in our way. For some of you may say, Have you not taught us all along,

that we must love God more than all things? Whereas, if we love him only for what he has done for us, we shall love ourselves more than him. For by this means our eye being fixed principally upon ourselves, we should mind ourselves only, and him no further than as he is beneficial to us, not at all as he is transcendently glorious in himself; and so our affections, being so mercenary and selfish, they cannot possibly be filial and sincere. And how can it be lawful for us thus to eye ourselves more than him, or him only in respect to ourselves!

To this I answer—

We must distinguish betwixt the occasion and scope of our love, that which first draws my love to him, and that which afterwards fixeth my love upon him. I do not say, that this is the great reason why we ought to love God; for certainly he infinitely more deserves our love for what he is in himself, than for what he is to us: for the expressions of his love to us are but finite, whereas the perfections of his loveliness in himself are infinite. But, however, I may make use of this consideration as a motive to stir up your love to him: and certainly, though the principal reason why we should love God, is, because he is so infinitely good in himself, yet the principal motive of our love to him, is the consideration of what continual goodness he hath shown to us; for we are more sensible of those streams of goodness that flow from him, than of the fountain of goodness that is in him. We cannot see how good he is in himself, but we daily see how good he is to us: and it is our eye principally that affects our heart; so that though we are to love him principally for what he is in himself, yet the best means to raise up our affections, so as to love him

for what he is in himself, is the consideration of the manifold expressions of his love to us.

Again, the Scripture doth give us sufficient warrant to love God for what he doth for us, as well as for what he is in himself, though we are still principally to love him for what he is in himself, rather than for what he is to us.

Give me leave to instance in these three or four places.

“I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications,” *Psa. cxvi. 1.* This was the reason why David loved God’s person, because God had heard his prayer.

“We love him, because he first loved us,” *1 John iv. 19.* Not only we love him, because he deserves love from us; but we love him, because he first loved us. Because he loves us, therefore we do love him; and, therefore, the consideration of his love to us is one reason of our love to him.

“Her sins, which are many, are forgiven,” therefore “she loved much,” *Luke vii. 47.* For, though we read, indeed, “for she loved much,” yet the other seems to be the truer exposition of them. For the greek word will bear that sense, and the scope of the place will scarce admit of any other; for our Saviour is here giving the reason why Mary had expressed so much love to him, even because he had expressed so much love to her, in the forgiving of her sins. He did not, therefore, forgive her her many sins, because she loved much; but, therefore, she loved much, because he had forgiven her so many sins. And, indeed, the antithesis in the same verse requires this interpretation; “But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little:” which antithesis plainly implies the foregoing thesis to be, He

to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much; not, He who loveth much, to the same much is forgiven. And, indeed, the analogy of faith requires it too; for God doth not pardon our sins because we love him; but rather we love him, because he pardons our sins. But,

That we may love God for his goodness to us, is plain from the words of my text too, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," so that we are not only to love him as he is the Lord, but as he is our God. "Thou shalt love the Lord," that implies that we must love him for what he is in himself: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," that denotes that we are to love him for what he is to us.

Well, then, seeing we may love the Lord for what he hath done for us, let us a little consider with ourselves what it is he has done for us, for which we should thus love him. And whilst I shall speak of the love of God, let your hearts be inflamed with love to him. As one candle lights another, so let the flames of love in God to you light the like flames of love in you to him. Consider,

(1.) It was God that raised thee out of nothing. Had he not made thee, thou hadst not been. Alas! from all eternity thou wast nothing, and hadst been so still, had not he caused thee to spring up like a tender bud, testifying from whence thou camest; and upon whom thou dependest, by thy inability to help thyself. Had not he raised thee out of the bed of nothing, thou hadst, to this moment, lain sleeping in it, not knowing any, nor known by any: and what should move God to put forth his everlasting arms, and bring thee out of this barren womb? Was it because thou lovest him? Poor creature!

thou who wast not, how couldst thou love? Or, if thou hadst loved anything, certainly nothing less than him, who was infinitely contrary, yea, contradictory to thine eternal nothingness. Yet, though thou couldst not love him, yet he could, and did love thee; yea, he so loved thee that hadst no being, that he gave thee a being, wherein to love himself: a being, I say, not that of plants or brutes, but he endowed thee with a rational soul, upon the face whereof he stamped his own image; giving thee an understanding, whereby to know him; a will, whereby to choose him; affections, whereby to love him, that gave them all unto thee. So that, as if he had not made thee, thou couldst have been nothing; so unless he had enabled thee, thou couldst never have loved anything. It was he who gave thee that very affection of love, which thou now ungratefully placest upon other things more than him. Had not he given thee that passion, thou couldst not have loved anything; how much then art thou bound to love God more than everything, seeing without him thou couldst have loved nothing! Oh! then remember, God loved you before you was, do you love God now you are; and seeing he so loved you as to give you being, do you so love him as to improve your being for him.

(2.) As he raised you out of nothing, so it is he who still keeps you in your being. It was he alone who did create you; and it is he alone who can preserve you. So that thou art as unable to keep thyself from falling down from thy being unto nothing now, as thou wast to raise thyself from nothing unto a being before. As he made all things by the power of his word, so it is he who upholds "all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3.

Had not he put his everlasting arms under thee, thou hadst never risen up from nothing; and should he take away his everlasting arms from thee, thou wouldst again fall down to nothing: so that every moment of thy life is a monument of his love. Neither is it he only who upholdeth thee, but it is he who continues all the faculties of thy soul, and members of thy body. It is he by whom thou knowest anything, by whom thou willest anything, by whom thou desirest anything, by whom thou enjoyest anything, and by whom thou lovest anything. Thou couldst have had nothing to love, unless he had given it thee; neither couldst thou love it now thou hast it, unless he enabled thee. Oh! then, how infinitely art thou engaged to love him above all things, without whom thou couldst neither have anything to love, nor love anything thou hast; without whom neither thou that lovest it, nor the thing thou lovest, could continue one moment in its being!

(3.) As it is he who preserves you in your being, so it is he who protects you from evil. Without him thou couldst not but fall down to nothing, and without him all evil would fall down upon thee. It is he alone who gives good things to thee, and it is he alone who withholdeth evils from thee. Oh! how many unseen dangers doth he continually keep us from! How often had that roaring lion, the devil, before now devoured us, had not the Lion of the tribe of Judah rescued us! How oft have we been upon the brink of ruin, but that it was God that kept us from falling in! How art thou engaged to God for every good thing thou hast, and for every evil thing thou hast not! It is of his mercy that thou art preserved, and it is of his mercy that thou art not

consumed. Unless he had loved thee more than thou lovest him, there is nothing that is good, but would have been kept from thee; there is nothing that is evil, but would have been thrown upon thee. It is only from him that thou art here, and not upon thy sick bed; here, and not in prison; yea, here, and not in hell. Neither is it he only who defends thee from temporal, but from spiritual evils; for without God, as there is no misery but would fall upon thee, so there is no sin but thou wouldst fall into. Art thou not a murderer? Art thou not an adulterer? Art thou not a drunkard? Art thou not a thief? Yea, art thou not a blasphemer? Art thou not an atheist? Not to thyself, not to thyself, but to the name of God give the praise and glory. For as it is only God's constraining grace that enableth thee to do the good thou doest, so it is only God's restraining grace that prevents thee from doing the evil thou doest not. And therefore, thou art bound to love God, both for what thou art, and for what thou art not; for what thou doest, and for what thou doest not.

(4.) It is he also who directs thee in all thy ways, and prospers thee in thy undertakings. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," Jer. x. 23. No, it is God only who directs our steps for us. When thou art in doubts and perplexities, and knowest not which way to take, it is God who is a voice behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk in it;" it is he who enlightens thy understanding, quickens thy apprehensions, and directs thy thoughts, ordering the spirits in thy brain, that those may occur which are most advantageous and beneficial. If thou art rich, it was he who directed thee to the means thou wert to use, and then prospered thee in the using of them: and whatever thy condition now be, the

whole chain of causes, and series of providences, which have brought thee from thy mother's womb unto what thou art, was ranged and managed only by his almighty power; so that thou art nothing, thou doest nothing, thou hast nothing, but what thou art beholden for. Is it by thy labour and industry that thou hast gotten thy estate? Who was it that made thee thus laborious and industrious, but God? Is it by thy gifts and parts that thou art advanced to preferments? Who was it that gave thee those gifts and parts, but God? Hast thou great friends and many lovers in the world? Who was it that made them thy friends and lovers, but God? It was he who gave Joseph favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison, Gen. xxxix. 21. It was he who brought Daniel into favour and love with the prince of the eunuchs, Dan. i. 9. So that, as without him we could not love others, so without him others would not love us. And, therefore, the more others love thee, the more thou art bound to love God.

(5.) As if all this were nothing, God, to manifest himself still further to thee, came down from his blessed throne, clothed himself with flesh, became subject to his own creatures, yea, and unto death itself, and all to redeem thee from it. Oh glorious condescension! Oh ravishing expression of Divine love! that eternity should stoop to time, heaven come down to earth, glory be wrapped in misery; that God himself should become man, and all to reconcile man to himself! Oh! "what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him!" Psalm viii. 4. Who are we, or what was our father's house, that God himself should not only become man, but

suffer for us, and undergo cruelties, reproaches, and stripes, from those that could not lay them upon him, did not he at the same time enable them!—that he should be condemned by such as could not pronounce the sentence against him, did not himself vouchsafe them breath to do it!—yea, that he should suffer death from those that borrowed their lives from him! Oh! how can you think of these things, and keep your hearts within your breasts? How are we able to consider how much God hath done for us, and not burn in love to him! Oh! ye that love yourselves, your sins, your lusts, your friends, your lives, or anything more than God, behold the Most High himself mocked, despised, spit upon, crowned with thorns, drinking gall and vinegar, and, last of all, undergoing the pangs of death, and all to redeem you to the joys of love! Consider, I say, these things, and then tell me, whether he doth not infinitely deserve your love more than the things that have it? Consider, that he assumed thy nature, that thou mightest partake of his; he became the Son of man, that thou mightest become the son of God; he hungered, that he might feed thee with his own flesh; and thirsted, that he might give thee to drink of his own blood; he was apprehended, that thou mightest be secure; derided, that thou mightest be honoured; condemned, that thou mightest be absolved; and crowned with thorns here, that thou mightest be crowned with glory hereafter. He came from heaven to earth, that thou mightest go from earth to heaven; yea, “he that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we” that know nothing but sin “might be made the righteousness of God in him.” He who was innocent, was punished, that thou, who art guilty, mightest be pardoned; he was

crucified, that thou mightest be glorified ; he who had lived in heaven from eternity, came and died on earth in time, that we who die on earth in time, might go and live in heaven to eternity. Oh, how canst thou muse of these things, and the fire not burn within thee ! Where is thy heart, that thou dost not throw it, all on flames with love, at the foot of that God, who hath done so much for thee ?

(6.) He did not only come down once to die for thee, but he is still pleased to come down and live within thee ; he did not only assume our human, but we partake of his Divine nature. And if it be an honour for the king to remove a subject to his court, what an honour is it to remove his court to his subject ! If it be an honour for God to take us up to live with him, oh, what an honour is it for him to come down and live in us ! yet this honour have all his saints. “ Know ye not,” saith the apostle, “ that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? ” 1 Cor. iii. 16. Oh, what an expression of love ! can you desire more from God, or God bestow more on you ? But tell me, my brethren, seeing he who inhabits eternity, vouchsafeth also to come and dwell in you, what can you do less than receive him into the uppermost place in your hearts, and entertain him with the choicest of your affections ? Seeing he is pleased to live in you, how can you forbear loving of him ?

(7.) Consider further, what God hath laid up for you in heaven, as well as what he hath vouchsafed to you on earth. His mercies upon earth are infinitely more than you do deserve, but the glory he hath prepared for you in heaven is infinitely greater than you can imagine ; “ for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of

man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9: So that the delights of heaven shall not only be greater than we as yet enjoy, but higher than we as yet can fancy; and therefore expect not that I should describe them to you, for, were I able to describe them, they would be infinitely less than they are: no, all that I can tell you of them is, that they are greater than I am able to tell you of. Only this we know, that those joys of heaven will as much transcend our expectations, as the pleasures upon earth deceive them; for there certainly we shall have infinitely more than we can here desire; yea, there we shall enjoy more happiness than here we are capable of: for our capacities shall there be enlarged, as well as filled; so that we shall be capable of enjoying more, as well as enjoy as much as we are capable of. Oh! my brethren, you who, like worms, are still creeping and crawling upon earth, conversing with nothing but dust and clay, you little think of the joys which they are transported with, who are admitted into the court of heaven, and made partakers of those transcendent glories; you little think what it is to see God face to face, and to bathe yourselves in those rivers of pleasure, which are at his right hand for evermore. Were the great God but pleased to open you a casement into this glorious palace, and give your souls but the least glimpse of these ravishing delightful glories, I dare say you would be a thousand times more desirous of heaven than ever you were of anything upon earth; you would even melt away into holy longings, and thirstings, and pantings after those things, which as yet you slight and disregard. And verily, for all the low undervaluing thoughts you have as yet of heaven,

so as to prefer the seeming pleasures upon earth before it, assure yourselves, if God shall be ever pleased to bring you to it, you will be of another mind. Nay, let me tell you, you must be of another mind before you are ever likely to come there; much more, when you shall once be possessed of the actual enjoyment of those transcendent glories, which I am as unable to express, as desirous to enjoy, you will then think the highest of your affections infinitely too low for that God, who hath provided such mansions for you.

(8.) If thy frozen heart be not as yet dissolved into love and affection to the great God, for these wonderful expressions of his love to thee; consider his ends in all these things. Alas! he aims at nothing in all this for himself, but all for thee. It is he only who does the work, but it is we only who receive the gains. For before the world or any part of it had a being, God was brim-full of glory, infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, being all joy and bliss, all honour and glory, yea all things desirable to himself: so that before he had made his creatures he stood in no need of them; and now he hath made them, he is never the better for them; he was infinitely happy in himself before, and cannot be more happy in us now. Neither did he make creatures out of any such design, to be anything advanced in his happiness by them, or to receive any accessions of glory from them, but merely out of his own essential goodness, which is naturally communicative of itself, even as the sun is naturally diffusive of its light, though he get nothing by it. And therefore, whether thou art damned, he is not the worse; or whether thou art saved, he is not the better for it. But however, out of his own intrinsical good-

ness, he hath made thee, and upon the same account is desirous to make thee happy; and if thou acceptest of the overtures of grace he makes thee, it is thou that receivest the happiness, not he. It is true, he is the good Husbandman who breaks up the fallow ground of thy heart, and sows the seed of grace in it: it is he also who waters, and weeds, and dresseth it, and causeth it to spring up and flourish; but when all is done, it is thou only that reapest and receivest the whole crop of glory from it. And therefore, thou must not think that he hath any ends in loving thee; he only loves thee, because he loves thee, Deut. vii. 7, 8; and now that he calls upon thee to love him, it is not because he wants thy love, but because thyself wanteth it: for it is no addition to his glory, but it is the perfection of thine, to love him with all thy heart. Oh, how art thou able to consider these things, and not be forced to cry out with the spouse in the Canticles, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love!" Sol. Song ii. 5.

2. Secondly, neither doth God only deserve your love, because he hath been so loving unto you, but more especially because he is infinitely lovely in himself. And certainly, though God doth give us leave to love him for these astonishing instances of his goodness to us, yet he requires us especially to love him for that bottomless ocean of goodness which is in himself. And, verily, for all the low apprehensions that we may have of the eternal Deity, did it but please the most high God to open our eyes, and show us that glory which shines round about us at this time, how should we all lie grovelling in the dust before him, and our souls be melted into holy desires and pantings after him!

When the Syrians came to Dothan, the servant of the prophet Elisha could see nothing but the chariots, and horses, and hosts of the Syrians; but when God had opened his eyes, "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha," 2 Kings vi. 17. Thus here you look about you from place to place, but can see nothing but your fellow-creatures about you; but if God were pleased but to open your eyes, as he did the servant of Elisha's, behold, the place is full of horses, and chariots of fire; yea, it is full of the glory of the great God, whom, if we could but see, how would our hearts be even snatched from us, and our souls transported wholly into the flames of love! And though these ravishments of love from the sight of God, may seem paradoxes and mysteries to deluded mortals, yet, certainly, could you and I but look upon this glorious object with the same eyes wherewith Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Peter and Paul, and the rest of the celestial hierarchy, do continually, and at this very moment, behold him, how should we all be raised beyond our former selves! how should we immediately throw our melted, ravished, inflamed hearts at the feet of such transcendent glory! Certainly, did we thus behold him, we should be as much unable to keep off our affections from him, as now we are to draw them up unto him; and it would be as impossible, as it is unjust, to let anything come into competition with him.

I know you expect I should speak something in particular, in the praise of those amazing and enamouring perfections that are in God, which thus deserve the choicest of our affections from us; but verily you must excuse me, for I am conscious of

myself, that my highest celebrations of them would be but as so many detractions from them. Only let me tell you this, in general, if ever it shall please this the chiefest Good to discover himself unto you, and display his glory before you, you will find him to be the source of wisdom, the abyss of goodness, the rule of holiness, the very centre of all perfections; one who doth not only possess infinite perfections, but one in whom every perfection is infinite; one so amiable, so desirable, so pure, so perfect, so altogether lovely, that had we no relation to him, had we received no expressions of love from him, yet his bare essence, his native excellences, could not but make us ravished and enamoured with him; one so altogether lovely, that the glorified angels, from the beginning of the world to this moment, could see nothing, either in or out of him, to lessen their affections to him: yea, one whom to behold, and love, and praise, will be our happiness for evermore; and, therefore, one whom, though thou shouldst sift and rack thy brains to eternity, to find out some exceptions against him, or some excuse for thy withholding thy affections from him, it would be impossible.

And, therefore, be it known unto you, that every soul amongst you that doth not love God above all things, therefore does it not because he doth not know him. For, as thou canst not love him, unless thou knowest him, thou couldst not but love him, if thou didst know him. Let not the deceitful world, then, cheat thee any longer of thy affections, but let Him be the centre who was the Author of them: dote no longer upon these childish gewgaws, but fix thy love upon the chiefest Good. And seeing he hath called for thy heart from thee, what canst thou do but throw it before him, all open, all melted, all on

fire with love unto himself, without keeping back the least spark of love to anything else, but only in subordination unto him. Raise up, therefore, thy affections to him, and fix thy love continually upon him, never give over heaving at thy heart, until thou hast gotten it up to him, who so infinitely deserves the choicest of thy affections, not only for those expressions of love which he hath shown to thee, but for those attractives of love, which are all concentrated in himself.

THE GREAT HAPPINESS OF LOVING GOD.

ROMANS viii. 28.

AND WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, TO THEM WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.

It is the wise man's observation, that "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them: all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath," Eccles. ix. 1, 2. The same is confirmed by the common experience of all mankind. Go where you will, you may, with him also, see under the sun, that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all," Eccles. ix. 11, and to all alike. Almighty God seemeth to scatter, as it were, the things of this world among the good and bad promiscuously, without any regard to virtue or vice; but that some of both sorts may get more, some less, some little or nothing, according as it happens. There is no judging of what a man is, by what he hath: you can never know a wise man from a fool, a christian from an infidel, a saint from a sinner, by his living in a palace or in a cottage, by his being

clothed with robes or with rags ; by his being rich or poor, healthful or sickly, in honour or disgrace, or by any outward circumstance whatever. If there be any difference, the advantage seems mostly to lie on the side of vice and folly ; the worst men having usually the most, and the best men the fewest of the good things, as they are called, here below. As we read in the gospel, the wicked rich man “ was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day,” while honest poor Lazarus “ was laid at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table,” Luke xvi. 19—21. Thus it is at this day ; a jew, a turk, or, if there be such a monster in nature, an atheist, or, which is much the same, a deist, may thrive, and prosper, and flourish in the world, living in great ease, and plenty, and reputation among his neighbours ; while such as live in the true faith and fear of God, are destitute, afflicted, tormented, despised by all that are about them ; or, at least, are in much worse condition as to outward appearance than the other :—I say, as to outward appearance ; for if you look into the inside of things, you will see it to be quite otherwise ; for, after all, the wicked, profane, and irreligious people may abound for a while in the riches, and pleasures, and honours of this world, and therefore may look big, and swagger, and conceit themselves to be happy, and may be esteemed so by others also as wise as themselves, yet all this while their condition is as bad as bad can be on this side hell : for, living in sin, they are under the displeasure and curse of Almighty God ; so that all the fine things they so much boast of are accursed to them, and serve only to enhance their reckoning, and increase their torment another day. Their table is

only a snare to them, and their wealth an occasion of stumbling; their ease makes them secure, their honours proud, their strength presumptuous, and their plenty in this world puts all thoughts of the next out of their minds; so that they sail on, as they think, with a prosperous gale, till, on a sudden, they are engulfed and swallowed up in the abyss of eternal misery, which they never thought of before. Thus all their seeming blessings are so many real curses to them, and contribute sometimes to their fears, and cares, and troubles in this life, and always to their greater misery and torment in that which is to come.

Neither do only the things which they themselves enjoy, but all things else conspire their ruin; for He who made and governs all things, being incensed against them, nothing can do them good, but everything acting and moving only under him, must needs run cross to them, and some way or other concur to execute his wrath and displeasure upon them. So that, however they may flatter themselves with what they seem to have at present, as it is impossible for them to receive any real happiness and satisfaction from it here, so it is impossible for them to escape everlasting destruction "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," except they repent, and turn to him while they are in the body.

But if they do that, if they turn to God, so as to love and honour him, the case will be altered with them, so as to become just contrary to what it was before. Before, all things wrought together for evil, but now all things shall work together for good to them. This we may be confident of, for so the apostle himself was, when inspired by the infallible

Spirit of God, saying not only, we think, or suppose, or hope, but, "We know," we are sure, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose;" who therefore are not only much happier than the others are, however they may appear to the world, but they are the only happy people that are in it.

But this being a matter wherein we are all so nearly concerned, it behoves us to look a little more narrowly into it, that we may get as clear a notion of it as we can: for which purpose it will be necessary to consider—

I. Who those are who are here said "to love God," and to be "called according to his purpose;" that we may know whether we be in the number of them, and strive all we can to be so.

II. What kind of "good" that is for which all things are here said "to work, to them who so love God."

III. How all things work together for their good.

IV. What ground we have to believe they do so.

I. First, therefore, by those who are here said "to love God," and to be "called according to his purpose," we are to understand such as being regenerate of God's Holy Spirit, and so made his children by adoption and grace, have their minds wholly bent and inclined toward him, so as really to love and prefer him who made all things, before all things that he hath made; and so "are called out of darkness into his marvellous light," and that too "according to his purpose;" or, as it is in the original, "according to purpose," effectually, or, as we say, to purpose, so as to come in upon their being called, and to answer the end of it, by cleaving unto the

Lord with purpose of heart, Acts xi. 23, and making it their constant business to keep his commandments, to serve and glorify him, and to finish the work which he hath given them to do. "He that hath my commandments," saith he, "and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," John xiv. 21. Whatever people may pretend, he doth not look upon them as having any real love for him, unless they know his will and do it: but as many as do that, he reckons them in the number of his friends, his servants, his children, his elect, his saints, his peculiar people; and accordingly he takes particular care of them, and manifesteth his special love and favour to them, by ordering all things so as may tend most to their benefit and advantage; so that "all things," as the apostle here saith, "work together for good to them."

II. "For good:" not for this or that particular "good," but for "good" in general; nor for that which may only seem good in their own or other people's eyes, but that which is good for them in the judgment of God himself; and, by consequence, for their real, spiritual, and eternal good; for whatever can any way conduce to their being and doing good while they are upon earth, to the making of them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and so to the bringing of them at last to the actual possession of it. That this is properly the good for which all things work together to those who are so called, appears from the reason which the apostle gives of it in the words following my text, saying: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate,

them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 29, 30. This is the end, the top of this golden chain of all secondary causes, working together for good to those who love God, that they may be glorified with him for ever : which is the greatest, or rather the only good they can ever have, and all they are capable of. For this good, therefore, it is that all things work together for them while they are in this world, even that, when they go out of it, they may be eternally happy in the enjoyment of the chiefest good. Whatever doth, not conduce to this end can do them no good at all ; they had as good, if not much better, be without it, than have it : but whatever can any way contribute towards their obtaining of this good, is really good for them ; and therefore all things concur, or work together to bring it about. If riches will thus do them good, all things shall concur to make them rich : if poverty, all things shall concur to keep them poor : if it be good for them to be healthful and strong, all things shall concur to prevent sickness : if it be better to be sick or weak, all things shall concur to impair their health : and so in everything else that can be named. So that everything which happens, happens well for them, the best that can be ; in that it helps either to the subduing of some vice in them ; or to the regulating of some passion ; or to the breaking an ill custom ; or to the preventing some occasion of falling into sin or mischief ; or to the diverting some temptation ; or to the arming them against it ; or to the making them more watchful over themselves ; or to the exercising some virtue in them ; or to the putting them in mind of their duty, or to the keeping them close to it ; or to

the giving them an opportunity of doing some good, which otherwise they could not do; or else to their growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so to the fitting them better to serve God here, and to live with him hereafter. Whatever conduceth to these and such like ends is truly good for them, and therefore all things concur to effect it. They may be sure of it, for they have the word of God himself for it, assuring them here by his apostle, that “all things work together for good.”

III. How all things thus work together for it, is the next point to be considered; not that we can dive into the secrets of Providence, and see the wonderful series and concatenation of second causes, the dependence and influence of one upon another, and how every one contributes its share to the producing of such an effect: for these things are hid from us, or rather, they are beyond the reach of our understandings; and therefore it would be presumption in us to attempt the explication of them. It is sufficient for us to observe, that it is not any one thing by itself that doeth it; not only some, or many, but all things work together to effect it: as in a physical confection or composition, made up of many ingredients of several qualities, some hot and some cold, some dry and some moist, some lenitive and some astringent, and the like, all mixed together; although no one of these ingredients could do any good, but some perhaps, without the other, might do hurt; yet being all mixed together by a skilful hand, they may effect the cure for which they were designed. So here, it is not any one or more particular providences that produce so much good to those who love God, but all together, correcting, influencing, and

assisting one another, until they have produced it. So that, although no one thing can do it, yet if anything was wanting, it would not be done, everything conducing in its kind some way or other towards it: and so all things work together among themselves, and all with God, or rather under him, as the first cause and mover of them, who manageth and orders them; so as to make them "work together for good to them that love him."

IV. What ground we have to believe they do so, is the last and chief question to be resolved. But those who believe the Scripture to be given by inspiration of God, can make no question of it; it being so expressly affirmed in my text, as a thing most certain and notorious. "We know," saith the apostle, by Divine inspiration, "that all things work together for good to them that love God." The same necessarily follows also from many other places of holy Scripture; as where it is said that no evil shall befall such, *Psa. xci. 10*: for if no evil can befall them, whatever befalls them must be for their good. And where it is said, that "they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing," *Psa. xxxiv. 10*; for if all these things did not work together for their good, there might be some good thing which they might want; but that it seems by God's own word they cannot do: they cannot want any good thing; for indeed all things which are good are theirs; as appears also from the apostle, who, writing to those who were called at Corinth, saith, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours," *1 Cor. iii. 21, 22*. For if all things be theirs, all things must work together for their good, otherwise they could

have no use or benefit of them, which, be sure, they always have: for, as the same apostle saith, they are "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. vi. 10. Though they have no civil right to anything, they have a Divine right to, and an interest in all things that are, so as to possess and enjoy the benefit of them, by having them all working together for their good.

What is thus positively asserted in God's holy word, hath been confirmed also, and found true by the experience of his holy people in all ages. What more unlikely to do them good than their suffering evil? Yet David could say upon his own experience, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes," Psa. cxix. 71. And St. Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. What could be worse than for a man to be sold by his own brethren, carried a slave into a foreign country, and there put into a prison, as Joseph was? Yet all these things wrought together to make him the second man in the kingdom of Egypt. Who could have imagined that Saul's going to look for his father's asses should be the way to be anointed king? 1 Sam. x. 1; that Goliath's defying the armies of Israel should contribute to David's being advanced to the throne? 1 Sam. xvii. 10; that Job's losing all he had should be the means of his getting as much more? Job i. 13—19; xlii. 12. There are many such instances, both in sacred and profane history, which show how wonderfully all things, even the most improbable, and such also as seem to look just contrary, yet turn about at last, and work together to produce some good effect; as none of us but may see also in

ourselves, if we do but take notice of it. Nothing ever happened to any of us but what was designed for our good; and to those who truly love and trust in God, all things that happen produce the good they were designed for; insomuch that if any one thing had ever happened otherwise than it did, it would have been worse for them, if not their ruin. This every one may observe in many instances, if he doth but look back and reflect upon what hath befallen him through the whole course of his past life. And though we cannot, as yet, perceive in all, while we see only as through "a glass darkly," yet when we come to heaven, and there have the light of God's countenance shining continually upon us, by it we shall discover his goodness to us in everything that fell out from our first coming into the world to our going out again, and see how they all wrought together to bring us to that blessed place, that we may praise him for it, and enjoy the benefit of it for evermore.

But that we may be able also to give a reason of this hope that is in us, even that "all things work together for good to them that love God," we must further observe, that as this hope is grounded upon the infallible word of God, and strengthened by the constant experience of his people in all ages, so our very reason also may convince us of it, by demonstrating both that, and why it is so; or, to speak more plainly, both that "all things do work together," and how it comes to pass, that they so work "together for good to those that love God, and are called according to his purpose."

That they do so, may be sufficiently proved from this one argument: as there is no sort of people or nation we know in the world but have, at least, some

general notions of another life after this, so they all agree that they who are good and virtuous in this life shall be happy in the other. This seems to be one of those common principles which are planted in our very nature, so that none who have the use of their reason can deny it, without offering violence to themselves; much less can any who profess themselves to be christians doubt of it, it being so plainly revealed, and promised by Almighty God in the holy Scripture given by his inspiration. But if all things did not work together for good to such persons in this world, so as to bring them at last to a state of happiness in the next, this could not be, or at least we could never be certain of it: for some things might so fall out, as to impede and hinder their attainment of happiness, notwithstanding all their goodness and virtue. We often see how a little accident overthrows a great design. And if it were in the power of any one thing to prejudice those who love God, so as to prevent their salvation, they might never be saved; and so the word and promise of God (which is impossible) would fail. And so it might, too, if all things did not work together for their good, or in order to their salvation. For no one thing, except God, can do anything of itself; but all secondary causes concur to the producing of every effect; much more, so great an effect as the sanctification and salvation of mankind. So that if all things did not work together for it, it could never be effected. But we are sure that it is effected for all those who truly love God; and therefore conclude, that it is impossible but that all things should work together for their good.

Neither is it difficult to show, how they come to do so. For it is certain, that all who love God, are

beloved of him ; his love to them being the cause of theirs to him. " We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. Indeed, there is nothing more plainly revealed, or more frequently asserted in God's holy word, than that he hath a special love and kindness for them who truly love and honour him. " He that hath my commandments," saith our Lord, " and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him," John xiv. 21. " For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God," John xvi. 27. There are many expressions all over the Bible to the same purpose, but I have instanced more particularly in these, because they show that God, as he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath a particular love for those who love him and are effectually called by him. From whence it necessarily follows, that all things must work together for their good, and that they do so by reason of God's love and favour to them. For he being the First Cause, the supreme Director and Governor of all things that are, so that they all act and move only under him and according to his will and pleasure ; therefore all things work together for good to those who love him because he loves them, and it is his goodwill and pleasure they should do so : for nothing can resist his will, but all things work and move just as he would have them, and therefore must needs work together for good to them whom he loves, for that reason, because it is his will they should. Or, which is in effect the same, because he hath a goodwill or love for them, and therefore orders and determines the influences and operations of all things under him so as to make them concur and co-operate for

their good and benefit : as we see also in the troubles and afflictions which befall such persons ; for it is expressly said, “ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,” Heb. xii. 6. “ As many as I love,” saith he, “ I rebuke and chasten,” Rev. iii. 19 : which shows, that it is from his love to them that any trouble or chastisement falls upon them ; and that also it is for their good, the greatest good they are capable of, even that they may be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10 ; that they may be sanctified or made holy, “ as he who hath called them is holy ;” and so be meet to live with him in the other world. And what greater good can they ever desire ? Yet this is the happy effect of the very chastisements which God is pleased to lay upon those who love him ; and which he is therefore pleased to lay upon them because he loves them. So it is in all things else : “ All things work together for good to them that love God,” because he loves them, and therefore disposeth of all things so as to make them do it.

But how can this be ? Although there be many doubtless upon earth that truly love God, and are accordingly loved by him ; yet their love to him is far short of what he deserves from them ; it is expressed but very imperfectly ; and there is not the best of them but do many things offensive to his Divine goodness, and provoking to the eyes of his glory. How comes it then to pass, that, notwithstanding all their imperfections and provocations, he still continues to love them, and to love them so as to make all things serve them, and work together for their good ? This is a great mystery, but it will be soon unfolded, if we do but consider, that all who truly love God believe also in our Lord Jesus Christ ;

for it is faith that works by love. So that no man can have any true love for God without true faith in Christ; such a faith whereby he is united to him, made a member of his body, and so partakes of his Holy Spirit. For all who are thus nearly related to him upon earth, Christ is always interceding in heaven: he appears there in the presence of God for them, Heb. ix. 24; as the Mediator between him and them, 1 Tim. ii. 5, making up all differences that may happen; he is their Advocate with the Father to plead their cause, and bring them off upon all occasions; as he may well do, seeing he is a propitiation for their sins, and for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 1, 2; and is therefore "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25.

And hence it is, that those who love God, notwithstanding all their failures and imperfections, still continue in his love and favour so as to have all things work together for their good, even because his Son, their Saviour Christ, is continually interceding with him for them; who himself also having all things put under his feet, and being made the head over all things for his church, which is his body, Eph. i. 22, 23, he takes particular care that all things should work together for good to those who love God; they being all real members of his said body. This is the great work that he is continually doing in heaven. "My Father," saith he, "worketh hitherto, and I work," John v. 17. As God the Father is continually ordering all things, so as to make them work together for the good of the whole creation; so God the Son is continually ordering all things so as to make them work together

for the good of his church, and all the sound members of it; that they may not fail of that inheritance which he hath purchased for them with his own blood, and so it may not be spilt in vain; which, therefore, is another great reason why all things conspire in so wonderful a manner to do them good.

To which we may add, that as God the Father, and God the Son, so likewise God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both, co-operates with them in all things to bring about and accomplish the same most gracious design; not only by moving upon all things, as he did at first upon the waters, to bring them into such an order of working together as may tend most to that end; but also by moving upon those who love God, so as to enable them to get some good or other by all things that happen: so that, however things work together, they, by his assistance, are the better for it. We have a famous instance of this in St. Paul; "I have learned," saith he, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 11—13. For here we see, that he being strengthened and assisted by the Spirit of Christ, nothing could come amiss to him. He was ready for all occurrences alike; wealth and poverty, honour and disgrace, fulness and want, was the same thing to him. He was in all things instructed, having learned to use and improve every condition, so as to be the better for it, and therefore contented with it, and satisfied that it was the best he could be in at that time: insomuch that he could say upon his own

experience, that the very afflictions he met with "wrought out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. And in my text, that "all things work together for good to them who love God," as he did: such a mighty force had the Spirit of Christ upon him.

And so it hath upon all who love God as well as upon him: for, being all acted and governed by the same Holy Spirit, by him they are taught, directed, and enabled to obtain some good or other out of every dispensation of Divine Providence, and turn it to their own advantage, for which it was designed. They, by his Divine power, can extract good out of evil, and work their own salvation out of the same things which other people abuse to their eternal ruin and destruction: so that as all things else work together for their good, they themselves also work together with all things else to make them attain their end in being really good for them.

If they be rich and great in the world, they lay hold of the opportunities which God hath put into their hands, to "do good" in the world, to be "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;" and so to lay up "in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. If they be poor, and all things concur to make them so, it is to preserve them from the snares and temptations of the world; to keep them meek, and humble, and poor in spirit; to make them rich in faith, and hope, and trust on God; to put them out of love with this world, and to make them long for the other, where they shall have as much as the best of them, and infinitely more than any can have in this. And they accordingly make use of their low

condition, and improve it to such good ends and purposes.

If they enjoy health and strength of mind and body, they employ it wholly in his service who gives it to them. If they are sick and weak, the sense of their weakness adds strength to their faith, and seriousness to their repentance, and puts them upon daily expectation of, and preparation for their great change.

If they marry, and have a meet help, a suitable companion, their hearts are lifted up with thankfulness to God for it, and they strive all they can to help one another forward in the way to heaven, that they may live together there as well as here. If it be otherwise, they are patient and submissive; they learn to live above this vain and wicked world, and seek for comfort in heaven, seeing they can find none upon earth.

If they have children, they do all they can to answer God's end in giving them, by bringing them up in his nurture and admonition, that they may serve and glorify him in the world. If they have none, they have less care upon them for the things of this life, and therefore take more care of that which is to come.

If their children are good and dutiful, they live with a constant sense of God's special favour to them. If, after all, they prove wicked and undutiful, it puts them in mind how undutiful they themselves have been to their heavenly Father, and so keeps them humble and penitent for their former sins, and more careful to perform their duty to him, as they desire their children should perform theirs to them.

If they have any true friends, they thank God for them, and make use of their friendship as a means

whereby to do good to them as well as receive any kindness from them. If they have enemies, they take that occasion to show their love to Christ, by loving them in obedience to his command.

If they live in the midst of wars and tumults, they always stand upon their watch, that they may not be surprised with sudden death, but ready for it whenever it shall come. If all things are quiet about them, they can more freely serve God, and do good in the world; and, accordingly, make it their business to do so.

If they are advanced to honour in this world, they find by experience the vanity of that, and therefore seek more diligently for the honour that cometh from God only. If they live in disgrace and contempt among their neighbours, it makes them more sensible of their own vileness, and teacheth them to have their conversation more in heaven, where only true honour is to be had.

If they thrive, and gain much in the world by their calling or friends, or any other lawful way, they look upon it as coming from God, and put into their hands for his use and service, and therefore employ it accordingly. If they meet with losses and disappointments, they look upon them also as sent from God and designed for their good; and therefore contrive all ways whereby to get good and grow better by them: so that, in both respects, they can truly say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord," Job i. 21.

Thus we might run through all conditions of life, and all occurrences that can ever happen to any man upon earth, and show how those who love God, by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, use and improve them so as to receive great benefit and advantage

from all and every one of them. And then it is no wonder that "all things work together for good to those who love God, and are called according to his purpose;" seeing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and likewise the communion or fellowship of the Holy Ghost, is always with them.

If people would seriously reflect upon these things, and keep them always fresh in their minds, they would need no other argument to persuade them to call in their affections from all things else, and fix them wholly upon God; so as to devote themselves to his service, and make it their constant care and study to please, honour, and obey him. For what course can ye ever take whereby to get so much as ye may by this means? By your moiling and toiling in the world, ye may, perhaps, and but perhaps, get something that looks like wealth and honour in the eyes of deluded mortals; but, besides that, there is nothing at the bottom of it but vanity and vexation of spirit; so that you will not be one jot the wiser or better for it when you have it, if not much worse: besides that, I say, you can never expect to get all things, but only something, and some of the things only which are upon earth, which altogether bear no proportion to all that is in the world: whereas, by exercising yourselves continually in the service of God, by fasting and praying, and hearing God's holy word, and partaking of his body and blood, you may have "the thoughts of your hearts cleansed by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, so as perfectly to love him, and worthily magnify his holy name." And then all things in the world will be yours, and work together, as ye have now heard, for your good. Then you will be rich indeed, as rich as all the world, and He who made it too, can make you. And yet there

is never a one here present but may become thus rich, so as to have all things at his service, if he will but set himself in good earnest upon looking after it: which, therefore, I heartily wish you would all do, as you tender your own good and welfare. And if any have done it already, as I hope some have, I as heartily wish them joy of that prodigious estate they are now possessed of. Whatever you have, or have not upon earth, it is all one, for all things are yours; what ye have not, as well as what ye have, always work together for your good. Ye cannot doubt of it; for He who made and disposeth of all things in the world hath here assured you of it. He hath already settled them all upon you that they may do you all the good ye are capable of in this world; and in the next you will “inherit all things,” Rev. xxi. 7, and so be as happy as it is possible for you to be, through Christ our Lord.

ALL THINGS TO BE DONE TO THE GLORY OF
GOD.

1 CORINTHIANS X. 31.

WHETHER THEREFORE YE EAT, OR DRINK, OR WHATSOEVER YE
DO, DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

As ever we desire to live well, and do good in the world, we must take a special care to direct our lives and actions all to a right and good end. For though a good end can never make a bad action good, yet a bad end always makes an action bad: be the matter of it ever so plainly commanded by God, and the manner of our doing it ever so agreeable to his revealed will; yet, after all, the action itself cannot be good, unless the end for which we do it be so. For it will fail in one of the most necessary causes and qualifications required to it: and that is one great reason that there is so little good ever done in the world, because men seldom make that which is truly good, the end of anything, much less of all things they do. All men, as they are understanding and free agents, propound some end or other to themselves in all their actions; and it is always something which they apprehend to be good and convenient for them, and think they may be better and happier with it than without it, otherwise they would not desire it, nor do anything for it. But most men, being led more by fancy, than by reason or religion, are apt to mistake that for good, which is not so; and through

that mistake spoil all their actions, by directing them to a wrong end.

This is the case of all who labour only to get a livelihood in the world ; of all who design nothing but to enrich themselves ; of all who lay out themselves wholly to advance their families ; of all who aim no higher than at sensual delights and pleasures ; of all who aspire at the imaginary honour and grandeur of this world ; of all who court the multitude, and strive above all things to be thought wise, or great, or good, or ingenious, or learned, or valiant, or any thing more than ordinary among men : this indeed is the case of all who make anything in this world the end of their living and labours in it. Their labours are all lost, they live to no purpose ; for they never do any one good work : those things they aim at in all their actions, having nothing of real worth and goodness in them ; nothing of truth or certainty ; nothing of happiness or satisfaction to the mind ; nothing but what is below and inferior to them as men ; nothing that can either make them or do them good, or contribute anything towards it.

You cannot but all acknowledge the condition of such men to be very sad and deplorable ; for as they never do any good in this world, they can never receive any in the next ; but as they spend their time in doing ill, they must spend eternity in suffering for it. And yet this is the case of most men in the world, and I fear of most here present. Neither is there any way whereby it is possible for any of us to avoid it, without turning our eyes for the future to their proper object, and making that the great end and design in all our actions which God himself hath prescribed to us. What that is, we need not go far to seek, having it here under his own hand,

and delivered to us by his apostle, saying, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." From whence it is evident, at first sight, that it is the will and pleasure of him who made us, that his glory be the end, not only of the greatest, but of the least, not only of some, but of all the actions of our whole life. So that whatever is not done to this end, is not done according to the will of God, and therefore can never be good and acceptable in his sight.

This, therefore, being a thing that is not only very good in itself, but that without which nothing we do is good, we cannot but look upon ourselves as highly concerned to understand the true nature and grounds of it; for which purpose therefore we shall consider,

I. What we are to understand by the glory of God.

II. What it is properly to do anything for the glory of God.

III. In what sense we ought to do all things for that end.

IV. Why we ought to do so.

I. The first question must be first resolved, because the others depend upon that; and it is not so easy a matter to do it, as it may seem at first sight. For though the glory of God be often mentioned in Scripture, and we often speak of it in our common discourse, yet it is not so commonly understood. It is the glory of the supreme Being of the world, and therefore so great, so resplendent, so infinite, that we cannot cast our eyes upon it, but they are immediately dazzled; we cannot think of it, but our thoughts are presently confounded: how then can we find words whereby to express and declare it? However, I shall, by his leave and assistance of

whom I speak, attempt something towards it, that we may understand what the Scriptures mean by the glory of God : but lest I should say anything unbecoming of it, and so disparage rather than explain it, I shall keep as close as I can to God's own word, who best knows his own glory, and has been pleased to give us as much light into it as he thought good and needful for us, as in other places of Scripture, so especially in that, where he condescended to discourse with Moses upon this very subject, *Exod. xxxiii.*

For there we read, that Moses "pitched the tabernacle without the camp," and called it "the tabernacle of the congregation ;" or rather, as the word signifies, "the tabernacle of meeting," where God would meet his people, and be found of those who sought him, *Exod. xxxiii. 7.* And accordingly, when Moses entered into the tabernacle, "the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses," *Exod. xxxiii. 9.* We often find in Scripture, God's special presence signified by a cloud hovering over the place where he was pleased to exhibit it. And it is sometimes said, that "the glory of the Lord appeared in it," or with it, *Exod. xvi. 10 ; xl. 34, 35 ; 1 Kings viii. 10 :* "like a devouring fire," *Exod. xxiv. 17,* or an extraordinary brightness and light shining in or near the cloud. As at our Saviour's birth it is said, "The glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds," *Luke ii. 9.* But at this time Moses saw no such light or glory appearing in the cloud. He only saw a cloud, and heard a voice coming out of it, but did not see him that spoke it ; and therefore desired, and made it his humble request, that he might see his glory, and his way, so that he might know him, saying, "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace

in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee," Exod. xxxiii. 13. He did not ask to see God himself, but his way: that is, his way or manner of working and manifesting himself in the world. So the rabbins say, that by the "ways of God," are understood his properties or perfections, which he exerteth in the government of the world. And so doth David himself, where he saith, "The Lord made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel," Psa. ciii. 7.

After this, Moses desires the same thing again in other words, saying to God, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," Exod. xxxiii. 18. To which God answered, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee," Exod. xxxiii. 19. This was a full answer to Moses' request; but lest Moses should mistake his meaning, he adds, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live," Exod. xxxiii. 20. As if he had said, If by my glory thou meanest my face, my very essence or nature, that cannot be seen by any mortal; but I will show thee as much of my glory as mortals are capable of seeing, by causing my goodness to pass, and proclaiming my name before thee. For which purpose, saith he, "Thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen," Exod. xxxiii. 21—23. Where, as by his "face" we are to understand his essential glory, or his Divine nature itself, wherein all his perfections concentre, or rather are all but one and the same perfection; so by his "back parts,"

we may understand the emanations of his essential glory, or the manifestations it maketh of itself in the exercise of its Divine perfections, in the government of the world, and particularly in respect to mankind; which last show forth the glory of God, *à posteriori*, by its effects and consequents, although, *à priori*, we can see nothing of it. As we can neither see nor know anything of the sun, what it is in itself, but we behold its glory in its light and heat, and many wonderful effects which it produceth upon the earth.

That this is the proper meaning of the promise which God here made to Moses, is evident from his manner of fulfilling it. God had promised him to make all his goodness and his glory pass before him, and to show him his back parts. Now, in the next chapter, where this promise is fulfilled, it is written, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty;" (or as the words may be rendered, 'That he will not utterly destroy;') "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third, and to the fourth generation," Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Here the jews reckon up thirteen properties of God, whereof only one is vindictive, and that too is the last. These are the ways of God, as David himself observes, Psalm ciii. 7, 8. These are those Divine perfections which he displays and manifesteth in the world, and especially towards mankind; and that therefore is properly called the glory of God, which shines forth in the manifestation of these perfections.

As where our Saviour said to Martha, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" John xi. 40; that is, his infinite power, and goodness, and mercy, manifested in raising her dead brother to life. Hence the seraphim cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory," Isa. vi. 3; that is, of his Divine properties exerted and manifested in all his works. This is properly the glory of God, and that so great, so infinitely great, that although it shine continually about us, so that, unless we shut our eyes, we cannot but see it as clearly as we do the light of the sun at noon-day, yet we are not able to comprehend it, but must cry out with the apostle, where, speaking of God's mercy, he saith, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever," Rom. xi. 33, 36.

But being got upon the place where God was pleased to proclaim his name, and to make his glory and goodness pass before Moses, I cannot leave it till I have further observed, that although there be several other names and properties of God commonly attributed to him in his holy word, besides those which are there specified and particularly mentioned, yet they are all included or implied in one or other of them. His great essential name, "Jehovah, the Lord," is twice used, once singly, or by itself, and again with אלהים, "God, the Lord, the Lord God." The first, I humbly conceive, signifies what he is in himself, without respect to his creatures; as his existence in and of himself, his simplicity, his immensity, his omnipresence, his omniscience, his

immutability, his eternity, and many such perfections, which we are not able to comprehend, are all contained in his name "Jehovah," signifying being or essence itself: but where it is used with the word "God," it seems to denote all those perfections which he manifesteth in the creation and government of the world, and all things in it, as his wisdom, his omnipotence, his goodness, his all-sufficiency, his authority and supreme dominion, which he exerciseth in and over all and every creature that is. And so, "The Lord God" is the same as if he had said, The Lord, the Almighty, all-wise, all-good Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things: this he speaks of himself, with reference to the whole creation. But the rest of the properties here mentioned, as his mercy, his grace, his long-suffering, his abundance in goodness, or bounty, and truth, his keeping mercy for thousands, his forgiving iniquities, transgression, and sin, have all respect to mankind in a particular manner. And by the last named, his "forgiving," or, as the word signifies, "his taking away iniquity, transgression, and sin," he plainly shows his special love to them, in sending his Son, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

These are those Divine perfections wherein the glory of God appeareth especially to us, and wherein he is so transcendently, so infinitely glorious, that no man can think of them as he ought, but he must needs admire and adore him. As Moses did, who had no sooner heard them proclaimed, but he "made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped," *Exod. xxxiv. 8*. And though we never heard them proclaimed as he did, yet we see them continually shining forth towards ourselves, and in

all things else : as David saith, " The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth his handywork," Psalm xix. 1 ; because his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, appear so clearly in them. And hence it is, that when we acknowledge any of his Divine perfections, and testify the same either by words or deeds, we are said to " glorify him." As when Christ had raised a dead man to life at Nain, it is said, that, " the people glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us ; and, That God hath visited his people," Luke vii. 16. They acknowledged God's truth, his goodness, and mercy, in visiting his people, and raising up a great Prophet among them ; and this is called their glorifying him. And therefore, to glorify God, is opposed to speaking ill of him : " On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified," 1 Pet. iv. 14. And wherever God is said to be glorified, as he often is, in the holy Scriptures, this was the way whereby it was done. Neither is there any other way whereby it is possible for us to glorify so glorious a Being as he is, but only by acknowledging and admiring his glory ; and therefore St. Paul saith, that " He shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10 ; that is, he shall be glorified, by being admired in them for the infinite goodness that he hath manifested to them. I say his goodness, because that implies all the perfections which he exerteth in them, and so is the same with his glory ; as appears from his own words to Moses before quoted. For, having first said, " I will make all my goodness pass before thee," Exod. xxxiii. 19, he afterwards saith, " While my glory passeth by ;" whereby he gives us to understand, that his glory is nothing else

but his goodness shining forth in all his works; and, by consequence, that his goodness in this place doth not signify any one, but all his perfections manifested in the world; and the more they are manifest, the more he is glorified. And therefore, our blessed Saviour, in his prayer to his Father, having first said, "I have glorified thee on the earth," he afterwards shows how he did it, saying, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world," John xvii. 4, 6. And thus it is that we must glorify God, if we ever do it at all, even by manifesting his name, that is, himself, or, which is the same, his perfections in the world; for herein it is that his glory properly consisteth. And whenever we speak of the glory of God, we mean nothing else but these his Divine properties, as displayed and manifested in the world, which are therefore called "his glory," Eph. iii. 16.

II. I have insisted the longer upon this, because it will help us to understand the next question aright, even what it is properly to do anything to "the glory of God:" for, seeing that "the glory of God" is nothing else but the manifestation of himself and his perfections in the world, hence it necessarily follows, that he who doth anything for that end and purpose, that God and his perfections may be better manifested in the world, may be truly said to do it "for the glory of God." Although God, as the psalmist saith, "be good to all, and his mercy is over all his works," so that all reasonable creatures, whose hearts are pure and holy, cannot but see him in everything that is; yet mankind, being corrupted and defiled with sin, are apt to live as without God in the world; taking no more notice of him than a blind man doth of the sun, which he cannot see,

though it shine ever so clearly. Now, when a man doth anything whereby the goodness, the wisdom, the power, the mercy, or any of the properties of the most high God, is made more manifest and evident in the eyes of men than otherwise it would be, so that they may see and admire him, such a one glorifies God; and if he doth it with that intention and design, and no other, then he properly doth it "for the glory of God."

That this is the true and genuine sense of the phrase, as it is used in my text, appears from the context itself; for the apostle is here speaking of eating such things as are offered in sacrifice to idols; and saith, that "it is not unlawful to eat of them," but only in the case of scandal and offence which may be taken at it: as if a christian be invited to eat with unbelievers, who sometimes had such meat at their tables as had been offered at an idol altar; the christian might lawfully go thither; but if any one should say to him, this is offered in sacrifice to such or such an idol, as suppose to Jupiter, Diana, Ceres, in that case the christian ought not to eat of it, for his sake who showed it: for in that he told him, that it was offered to such an idol, he thereby showed that he thought if the christian really believed what he professed, he would not eat of it; that being accounted among the heathen, as an acknowledging the idol to be God, and a considerable honour done to it, as such. In which case, therefore, the christian ought not to eat of it, lest he should seem to acknowledge any other god but the Creator of the world, and so give occasion to the unbelievers to think, that for all his professing to worship none but him, the true God, yet he is not so fully persuaded of it, but that he can join with them in doing honour

to other gods besides him ; at least, when he can thereby gratify his palate, and the company he is in. From whence the unbelievers might take occasion to think better of their idols, and worse of the true God, whom the christians profess to worship : which would be a great dishonour to him, by encouraging others to continue in the worship of false gods, and so hindering them from giving that honour to the true God which is due unto him. In this case, therefore, the apostle would not have christians eat of anything that is offered to idols. And then having proved that this doth not infringe their christian liberty, but that they may lawfully eat of anything without scruple, where they can do it without offence ; he lays down this as a general rule to be observed upon all occasions : “ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” And then he adds, “ Give none offence, neither to the jews, nor to the gentiles, nor to the church of God,” 1 Cor. x. 32 : that is, do nothing whereby others may be offended at your religion, or from whence they may take occasion to think or speak evil of the God you worship ; but rather carry yourselves so among all you converse with, that they may see and acknowledge his majesty and dominion over the world. As in this case ; if upon notice given you that such a thing is offered to an idol, you refuse to partake of it ; both he that told you of it, and others, will thereby clearly see that you are fully persuaded in your conscience, that the God you worship is the only true God, and that he is so great, so glorious, so mighty, and so righteous a Being, that ye dare not do anything whereby you may seem to own any other god, and so dishonour and displease him ; which may be a means of

putting others also upon thinking as highly and honourably of him as you do, and so may be persuaded to serve and worship him as they ought. This is, in short, the apostle's scope and design in this place; from whence it plainly appears, that where he saith, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," his meaning is, that all men, especially christians, should make this the great end of all their actions, that Almighty God may be better known, acknowledged, admired, and honoured in the world: and therefore this must needs be the proper meaning of doing anything to the glory of God.

But lest this should not be so well understood by all as I could wish it was, I shall endeavour to explain it by some known instances. When Abraham had received the promise from God, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," although, his age and circumstances considered, the thing might seem impossible to be done, yet, as the apostle saith, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform," Rom. iv. 20, 21. By this means he gave glory to God, even by being strong in faith, and fully persuaded of his truth and power to perform what he had promised, how impossible soever it might seem to be. So here, he that doth anything, whereby to demonstrate to the world that he is fully persuaded of God's wisdom, goodness, truth, power, or the like, he doth it to the glory of God, because God, by that means, may be better known and admired in the world.

Hence it is, that our Saviour calls his disciples, "The light of the world," Matt. v. 14; because by

them men may see the goodness of God, as they see his works by the light of the sun. And therefore he adds, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," ver. 16. Though he would not have them do good works only that men may see them; yet he would have them do them so that men may see them, and glorify God, by acknowledging his grace and goodness in them. And this is properly their doing them "to the glory of God:" which plainly appears in every good work a man doth; because he thereby sets forth God's authority over the world, his goodness in what he hath commanded, and his grace, and mercy, and power, in enabling men to act accordingly. And therefore our Lord elsewhere also saith to his disciples, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," John xv. 8. And St. Paul prayed that the Philipians might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," Phil. i. 11. And when our Lord told St. Peter, that "when he was old, he should stretch forth his hands, and another should gird him, and carry him whither he would not:" St. John saith, that "he spake this, signifying by what death he should glorify God," John xxi. 19. Because his laying down his life, as he afterwards did, upon a cross, for Christ's sake, was as great a demonstration as he could give, of his being fully persuaded of God's truth and goodness revealed in the gospel. By this the apostle saith he should "glorify God," or this he should do to the glory of God. From all which it is evident, that the doing of a thing to the glory of God, is the same with doing it that God may be glorified; that is, as I have shown, that these

Divine perfections, which he exerteth in the world, may be seen, admired, and praised, as they ought.

III. This the apostle saith should be the end of all our actions: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." He instanceth particularly in eating and drinking, because, as I observed, he is here speaking of eating things offered in sacrifice to an idol. But lest we should think that he intended it only for that case, he makes it a general rule to be observed in all and every action of our life, that "whenever we eat or drink," upon any other occasion as well as that, and "whatsoever" else we "do," we still must do it for this end, even for "the glory of God." But then the next question is, In what sense we ought to do all things for this end, that God may be thus glorified, and so to the glory of God: which may be justly made a question; for if we should understand it in the strictest sense, as if a man was bound, in every particular action of his life, to be still thinking and aiming at the glory of God, his thoughts would be so continually taken up with the end, that he would not have time enough to employ about the means of effecting it, and so fail in the manner of doing his duty, by being too intent upon the end for which he doth it. And, besides, there are many lawful and necessary things to be done in a man's life, which he may not at first sight perceive how they tend to the glory of God, although they really do so: and therefore should a man do nothing before he is sure it will conduce to that end, he will be often forced to neglect or omit many necessary duties upon a groundless fear, that they will not be for the glory of God: whereby he would be involved in all such difficulties as would make his life both

uncomfortable to himself, and useless to the world. These and many such inconveniences would follow upon our taking this rule in so strict a sense. But how then is it to be understood?

It is to be so understood, that we ought always to be very tender of the glory of God, so as never to do anything, nor suffer anything to be done, if we can help it, which may tend to his dishonour, by giving others occasion to think or speak evil of him, or of that religion and worship which we profess to perform out of duty to him. That the words are to be understood at least in this sense, is plain from what I discoursed before, concerning the occasion of them in the context. And that it is as plain, that this is indispensably required of us, from the very nature of true religion which we all profess, and from the constant practice of those who have sincerely professed it, I shall instance only in two or three.

When God had threatened to destroy the children of Israel for their rebellion against him, Moses was so concerned for the glory of God, that he earnestly besought him not to do it only upon that account; for, saith he, "If thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness," Numb. xiv. 15, 16; and Deut. ix. 28. He feared it would be a dishonour to God, and therefore did all he could to prevent it. Yea, so zealous was he for the glory of God, that at another time he chose, he desired that his own name should be blotted out of the book of life, rather than God's name should be dishonoured: "Yet now," saith he,

“if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written,” *Exod. xxxii. 32*; which was certainly the highest expression that could be of his great zeal for the glory of God, and of his fear lest anything should be done which might reflect upon his power and goodness.

The same may be said of Joshua. When the children of Israel were smitten before the men of Ai, “Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, and said, O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?” *Josh. vii. 8, 9*. As if he had said, Thou hast promised to give us this land; and if, instead of getting it, we be destroyed in it, what will the people say? How will they blaspheme thy name, as being unfaithful to thy promise, or unable to perform it? This was that which he was most troubled at, as we should all be at everything that may give “occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,” as Nathan said to David, *2 Sam. xii. 14*. St. Paul seeing many who professed themselves to be christians walking so as to be a scandal and reproach to Christ and his religion, it cut him to the heart, and drew tears from his eyes: “Many,” saith he, “walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things,” *Phil. iii. 18, 19*. But what would St. Paul have said if he had lived in this age, when there are so

many millions who profess the faith of Christ, and yet so few, so very few, but who dishonour his sacred name, "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," by their lewd and wicked lives? This would have gone near to have broken his heart; and so it must needs do to all who sincerely love God and Christ above all things, as he did, and all true christians still do. And if we would manifest ourselves to be such, we must always have the same zeal for God and our blessed Saviour, so as to do all we can in our several places, that his holy name may not be profaned and dishonoured by others; especially, we must take care that we never do it ourselves: and for this purpose, whenever we meet with anything, as we often do, wherein the honour of God is concerned, we must do all we can for it, but nothing against it, though we were sure to gain the whole world by it. As we see in the holy martyrs, who, rather than they would sacrifice, or burn incense to an idol, and so dishonour the true God, by seeming to own any other, they chose to part with all they had in the world, and with their lives too. And though we should never be so situated as to be put upon such a trial, yet however we must show our good will and readiness for it, if there be occasion, by preferring the glory of God before our temporal interest and everything that is near or dear to us in this world: so that, if it come to that point, that we must either do something which may cast a reflection upon Almighty God and his holy religion, or else suffer some great pain, or shame, or loss to ourselves; we are cheerfully to choose the latter, so as to suffer anything ourselves, rather than the glory of our great Creator, and most merciful Redeemer

should suffer anything by us. For this is the lowest sense wherein we are to do all things to the glory of God, even by doing nothing at all against it.

I call this the lowest sense in which these words can be understood: for they certainly require us to go higher, even so far as, in the next place, to make it the main scope and business of our lives to promote the honour and glory of God, according to the several abilities and opportunities which he is pleased to give us for that purpose. And if we do that, whether we always think of it or not, we may be truly said "to do all things to the glory of God," because all things we do are designed in general for that end. As a covetous man, who makes it his great drift and design, through the whole course of his life, to get money; although he do not think of it in every particular action, yet he is properly said to do all things for that end, and no other. And it would be a horrid shame, if the men of this world should be more diligent and industrious in carrying on their little designs of advancing themselves and families in the world, than we are in promoting the great end of our lives, the honour of that Almighty Being in whom we live. This, therefore, is that which we are here commanded, even to propose this to ourselves, as the chief end and design of our lives, that God may be better known, admired, honoured, and glorified in the world, than he would be if we were not in it; and for that purpose to leave nothing undone whereby that end may be attained.

As for example: God is glorified by the constantly performing our public devotions to him "with reverence and godly fear;" and therefore we ought constantly so to perform them. He is glorified by

our praising his holy name, as he himself saith, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me," Psa. l. 23; and therefore we ought to praise him every day. He is glorified in the holy sacrament, as it is the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving; and therefore we should take all occasions of receiving it. He is glorified by our submission to the higher powers, in obedience to Him who set them over us; and therefore we ought to be subject "not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." He is glorified by our patient and cheerful bearing whatever he sees good to lay upon us; and therefore, whatever it is, we are to bear it patiently and cheerfully. He is glorified by our believing what he hath said, and trusting on what he hath promised; and, therefore, whatever he hath said or promised, we are to believe and trust on it. He is glorified by our abstaining "from all appearance of evil;" and therefore whatever appears to be evil, we must abstain from it. He is glorified by all the good works we do; and therefore we must do all we can. In short, he is glorified by our living in a constant and sincere obedience to all his laws; and therefore we must constantly and sincerely endeavour to obey them all, through the whole course of our lives: for, as the apostle saith, by breaking the law we dishonour God, Rom. ii. 23; so by keeping it, we glorify him; because hereby we demonstrate to the world that we are fully persuaded that he is our supreme Lord and Governor; and that all the laws that he hath set us, are like himself, holy, and wise, and just, and good. And therefore, in order to our doing all things as we ought, "to the glory of God," it is necessary that we make it the great end we aim at, and design all along in all our thoughts, words, and

actions, to approve ourselves to him, by observing his laws to the utmost of our knowledge and power, in the respective places, relations, offices, conditions, and circumstances, wherein he hath set us : according to that excellent rule in St. Peter, which may serve as a commentary upon my text : " If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth ; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever," 1 Pet. iv. 11.

But this is not all neither ; for this command, " Do all things to the glory of God," plainly implies, that we must not only make this the chief end of our actions in general, but we must aim at it as much as we can, in everything we do, that is of weight and moment. As David set the Lord always before him, Psa. xvi. 8 ; so we ought to have him and his glory always in our eye, and undertake nothing of consequence, but with respect to that end. Much to the same purpose is that of the apostle, where he saith, " Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him," Col. iii. 17 ; which command I do not see how it can be observed as it ought, unless we have an eye to Christ in whatever we do, and give thanks, or glorify God the Father by him, for enabling us to do it. So here, where we are commanded by the most high God, our Maker, to " do all things to his glory," it is plainly his Divine will and pleasure, that whatever we set about, we should look up to him, and therefore do it, that we may some way or other glorify him by it.

As, if a man goes to church, he must go with a design to glorify God there, and to be instructed.

directed, and assisted to do it better afterwards. If a man follow his particular calling, as all ought to do, he must therefore do it that he and his family may have wherewith to serve and glorify God in their generations. If a man undertake an office, or charge, or trust, he must therefore undertake it, that he may glorify God in the faithful discharge of it. If a man buy, or sell, or make any contract, or bargain, he should do it so justly and honestly, as to show he fears God, and so glorify him in the doing of it. If a man set upon the learning of any art, or trade, or science, or language, he should therefore do it, that he may be better qualified and capacitated to glorify God, than otherwise he would be. If a man erect a school, or hospital, give an alms to the poor, or exerciseth any sort of charity, he should do it only in obedience to God, and for his glory. If a man be in any company, he should discourse and converse with them so as may most conduce to this end ; according to the apostle's rule : " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers," and so bring glory to God, Eph. iv. 29. The apostle in my text goes much lower, saying, that if a man " eat or drink, he should do it to the glory of God ;" not only by begging his blessing upon it, and returning him thanks for it, but by doing it for that end and purpose, that we may serve and glorify God both in his soul and body, which are his.

Thus I might instance in all the main actions of a man's life, and show that they ought to be all directed to this as their ultimate end ; I say ultimate, because a man may doubtless propose other ends besides this to himself in what he doth ; but

they ought to be such as resolve themselves at last into this. As in eating and drinking, a man may aim at the preserving his body in health and vigour; but so that he may employ that health and vigour in the service and for the glory of God. In the use of the means of grace, a man may aim at his obtaining the grace of God; but he should aim at that, only that he may glorify God by it: and in whatever a man doth in order to it, he may lawfully aim at his own salvation, and have an eye to the recompence of reward; but that should be in order to his glorifying God for ever. So that this ought to be the ultimate or last end of all our actions, in respect of which, all other ends which we propose to ourselves should be but as means that tend to it; otherwise, we can never obey this command which our Almighty Creator hath here laid upon us by his apostle, saying, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

This, I confess, at first sight, may seem a very hard lesson: at least, I fear, it is but seldom practised; mankind in general looking no further than to gratify their flesh with the pleasures, their eyes with the riches, or their fancies with the honours of this world. One or other of these is the only end that most men aim at in everything they do; but that reasonable creatures, and such too as pretend to be christians, should make such things as these the end of any, much more of all their actions, is one of the most unaccountable things in nature. There can be no reason assigned for it except this one, that reasonable creatures themselves will act without reason, and against it too; suffering their appetites, their passions, or their humours to overpower their judgments, and put out or stifle that

little light that is within them ; so that they can look no further than to such things as are present and lay just before them, even the little inconsiderable trifles of this world ; which can never do them any real good, as their own reason, if it was duly consulted, would soon convince them : and so it would too, that there is nothing in this world worth our aiming at but the glory of God, and that will answer all the ends we can in reason propose to ourselves in anything we do, and by consequence ought to be first and chiefly intended ; which is the last thing I promised to show.

IV. And it is a thing that may be easily done. I need not go from my text for it : for we cannot but all acknowledge that there is all the reason in the world that the will of Him who made us and gives us power to act, should be the rule and standard of all our actions. But here we see that he hath declared it to be his will, that “ whatsoever we do, we should do it to his glory.” And if it be his will, it must needs be our duty ; and we are bound always to observe it, as ever we desire that anything we do should be good and acceptable in his sight.

Although this be reason enough why we ought to do all things to the glory of God, and we ought to do so only for that reason ; yet, to explain and press it a little further, we may observe, that God being infinitely wise and good, whatever end he proposeth to himself in what he doth, must needs be the wisest and the best that can be ; and that we and all who are capable of it are bound to imitate him as near as we can : to be holy as he is holy, 1 Pet. i. 16 ; and to be “ followers of God, as dear children,” Eph. v. 1 ; and so to carry on the same designs, and to aim at the same end as he doth, in

everything that we do by him. But whatever he doth, he doth it only for his own glory; as the wise man saith, "The Lord hath made all things for himself," Prov. xvi. 4. "For himself;" that is, for the manifestation of himself, his wisdom, his power, his goodness, his mercy, and all his Divine perfections; which, as I have showed, is that which he himself calls his glory, and which the Scriptures always mean by that word. So that to do all things for himself, is the same as to do all things for his own glory. Thus he himself explains it, saying, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. And in the same chapter again, "I have created him for my glory," Isa. xliii. 7. And as it was for this end that he made all things, it is for this end that he governs and orders all things that he hath made. As he said to Pharaoh, "And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth," Exod. ix. 16. And so in the case of Lazarus, when our Saviour heard that he was sick, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," John xi. 4. The same may be said of everything God doth, he doth it for his own glory. Neither can we imagine for what other end he can do anything, being infinitely happy in himself; and, therefore, in order to our imitating him, as we are bound, according to our capacities, we must do so too: whatever we do, we must do it "to the glory of God;" and so carry on the same design in the world that God himself doth, which must needs be acknowledged to be as much our interest, as it is our duty; for we shall

hereby "walk," as Enoch did, "with God," in his steps, and so continue always in his favour and under his protection.

And, besides, as God made all things else, so he made mankind in general, and us in particular, for himself. He did not make us to rake in kennels, and to scrape together the dust and dirt of the earth; to stand gaping after popularity, nor yet to sit still and do nothing; he did not make us to wallow like swine in the mire, or to gratify our flesh with brutal pleasures; he did not make us for the devil, to be his slaves and vassals; nor for this wicked world, to follow the pomps and vanities of it; neither did he make us for ourselves, to humour and please ourselves, or to seek our own honour or applause; but he made us wholly and solely for himself, to serve and glorify him: and unless we do that, we do not answer his end in making us, and so live to no purpose in the world. And whatever it is we do, that doth not tend to that end, will turn to no account at all; it would have been better for the world if it had never been done, and for us if we had never done it; and, therefore, as ever we desire not to labour in vain and to no purpose, or which is worse, to an ill one, whatever we do, we must do it to the glory of God.

Especially, considering that as God made us for this end, so it is for this end that he still preserves and supports us in our being; it is for this end he gives us health, and strength, and life, and all things necessary to it; it is for this end he continues our senses and reason to us, and all the powers and faculties of our souls. It is for this end he hath revealed his will and pleasure to us, that we may know how to do it; yea, it is for this end he redeemed

us to himself with the blood of his only begotten Son ; so that we are none of our own, but are "bought with a price ;" and, therefore, as the apostle argues, should "glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are his," 1 Cor. vi. 20. And if we be wholly his, as we certainly are, then we ought to be wholly employed in his service : but we are capable of serving him no other way, but only by promoting his honour and glory in the world ; which, therefore, we are bound to endeavour in everything we do ; otherwise he will look upon us as idle and unprofitable servants, and "cast us," as such, "into outer darkness ;" whereas, if we do all we can to honour him, he himself will honour us. We have his own word for it, saying, "Them that honour me I will honour," 1 Sam. ii. 30. And, "If any man serve me," saith Christ, "him will my Father honour," John xii. 26. And what can we desire more than to be honoured by God himself ? This honour have all the saints ; all who, "whether they eat, or drink, or whatsoever they do, do all to the glory of God."

What now remains, but that, knowing our duty, we should all resolve, by God's assistance, for the future to do it : for which purpose, in everything we do, especially that is of weight and moment, let us remember the end for which God himself would have us do it, and do it only for that end. Whatever we think will tend to his glory, let us set about it with all our might ; but whatever may cast any dishonour upon him let us avoid and shun, although we were sure to get the whole world by it. Every morning let us consider what we can do that day for Him who gives us all we have ; and at night, whether we have done it or no. Whatever talents

God hath put into our hands, let us remember that we are but stewards, not proprietors of them ; and therefore improve them only for our Master's use. In short, from this time forward, let this be the great end and design we carry on in the world, even to glorify Him that sent us hither, and redeemed us to himself for that very purpose. Let us but do this, and then we may be confident that we shall live under his care and protection, and have his love and favour, his blessing and assistance, attending us all our days on earth ; and at length shall get to heaven, where we shall both glorify and enjoy him for ever, through his only Son.

OF SETTING OUR AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE.

COLOSSIANS iii. 2.

SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS
ON THE EARTH.

MAN being a perfect microcosm, composed of two essential parts, a soul and a body, whereof the one was taken from the superior, and the other from this inferior world, hence it necessarily follows, that although both these parts do equally concur unto the constitution of a man, yet that which is of the purest nature, and most noble extract, must needs be designed at first to govern and rule the whole; and by consequence, that man, according to his constitution, was always to live and act according to the dictates and commands of his rational soul, and not according to the inclinations of his sensitive part. But by the degeneracy of our first parents, in hearkening to their senses, rather than to their reason, our souls have ever since been subject to the tyranny of our rebellious senses: and that part which at first was placed at the stern, to sway and order the whole man, according to those principles of reason which were infused into it, upon that account is now debased so low as to become a slave to every one of these senses, which it was made to govern. And, therefore, our great care in this world should be to restore our souls to their

throne and kingdom again; so that our flesh may not any longer usurp any power and dominion over them, as heretofore it hath done, and still will do, unless we keep a strict eye upon it.

Now, as it was in the first Adam that our souls lost their power, though not their right to govern, so it is only by the Second, that they can ever recover it again. But our comfort is, that as in Adam we fell from heaven to earth, so in Christ we rose again from earth to heaven; as the apostle intimates in the foregoing verse, "If ye then be risen with Christ;" for when Christ rose, all those that by a true faith were united to him, could not but arise with him; yea, so rise with him in our souls, as to live with him in heaven, even whilst our bodies are upon the earth. For this the apostle makes the necessary consequent of our being risen with Christ: "If ye then be risen with Christ," saith he, "seek those things which are above;" that is, your souls being now sanctified by Christ, and risen with him, have by that means got above your flesh and senses, and therefore you should not mind them any longer, nor suffer them any more to get the upper hand; but your souls should still be soaring aloft, looking after their eternal concerns in heaven, "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Which that we may do, we must be sure to call in all our affections from all things here below, and fix them only upon those things which are above, where our Saviour now is, and where we hope to be for ever: and therefore he adds, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Having thus brought you to the words, I shall endeavour to carry you through them, by explaining to you the true meaning and purport of them;

which it must needs behove you all rightly to understand, forasmuch as you all desire, I hope, to live like christians, and as becometh those who expect to be saved by Christ. But you can never live as those must do, whom Christ will save; nor, by consequence, be saved by him, unless you repent and believe in him. Neither have you any ground in the world to think you repent and believe in him, unless your affections be where he is; which, notwithstanding, they can never be, so long as they are entangled amongst the sensual and earthly objects here below.

Now, for the better understanding what is here commanded, I shall first explain the words themselves, and then the duties enjoined in them.

I. First, for the things which are here called "things above." Some things may be said to be above, in respect of nature, other things in respect of the earth. But here by the "things above," we are plainly to understand things above the earth, in that they are here opposed to things upon the earth; and therefore the "things above" here, are such things as are of a higher nature, and more noble principles, than to derive their descent from anything here below. And so we are commanded here to set our affections only upon those pleasures that are above, those honours that are above, those riches that are above, those friends and relations that are above, that God, that Christ, that all that is above.

Then, by the things upon the earth, we are here to understand such things as are conceived in the womb of the earth, and know no higher extract than dust and ashes; of this sort are all your carnal pleasures, your earthly riches, your popular applause; all which the apostle comprehends under "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

life," 1 John ii. 16. "The lust of the flesh;" that is, only luxury or carnal pleasures, which only tickle and delight the flesh. "The lust of the eyes;" that is, earthly riches, which can only flatter and please the eye. "And the pride of life;" that is, vain glory, which indeed is but a mere vapour, a shadow, a little froth, a very nothing; yet it is that which puffs up poor vain and silly mortals, and therefore it is called "the pride of life." And it is very observable, that these were the three baits wherewith Satan caught our first parents, and plucked them out of that ocean of happiness wherein they were created, Gen. iii. 6. First, he proposed the fruit as good for food; there was the lust of the flesh: then as pleasant to the eye; there was the lust of the eye: and then as a fruit to be desired, to make men wise; there was the pride of life. These, therefore, being the weapons wherewith the devil prevailed over our first parents, it is no wonder that he useth them so frequently and effectually against us: but we need not fear, if we can but perform this one duty, even not to set our affections upon them.

The word in the original is *φρονεῖτε*, which, as to its notation and common use, hath respect both to the understanding and will. As it respects the understanding, it denotes that our thoughts should not run upon the things upon earth, but that our meditations be always fixed upon those things that are in heaven. But, as the word hath reference to the will, it implies the several motions of the will, which we call affections; and so we are here commanded not only not to mind, but also not to love, not to desire, not to hope on, not to rejoice in the things which are here below, but only in those things which are above. So that although we are in

the world, and converse with the things of it, yet we are not to concern ourselves about them, any further than to do our duty in the station wherein God hath set us, and prepare ourselves, as well as we can, for our going into the other world; our hearts hanging loose and indifferent as to all things here below, being fixed only upon God, and those glories that are above.

II. This being the proper meaning of the words, our next work must be to show the reasonableness of the duties here enjoined. But seeing it is in vain to speak of setting your affections on things above, until they are first taken off from the things upon the earth, I shall first endeavour to show what little reason you have to trouble your heads so much about the things which are here below, or to set your affections upon them. And speaking not only to rational creatures, but, as I hope, to believing christians, I hope you will so seriously weigh and consider the force of the arguments which I shall produce, as to resolve, by the blessing of God, for the future, not to suffer your affections to lay grovelling amongst such low and pitiful things, as all things upon earth are in themselves, but much more in comparison of what you all expect in heaven.

1. First, therefore, let me desire you to bethink yourselves of whatever it is that you have or desire upon earth, and consider whether it be not altogether below you, and unsuitable to you, both as men and christians; for so at present I will suppose you all to be. But are you christians? then let me tell you, you are sons and daughters of the eternal God, the only Monarch of the whole world, and so are heirs apparent to the crown of glory. Tell me then, what an unseemly sight would it be to see a prince

doting upon a beggar, and robes enamoured with rags! How much more unseemly is it for you, who have nothing less than heaven entailed upon you, to lay doting upon the beggarly vanities of this lower world! which certainly all true christians should look upon as below their concern, carrying themselves as becometh those who expect, ere long, to solace themselves in the enjoyment of God himself. While David looked to his father's sheep, he carried himself as a shepherd; but when he had mounted the throne, majesty presently sat in his brows, and he behaved himself like a king. So you, although whilst you lived in your sins, and so were strangers unto God, you then lived like earthly creatures, conversing with nothing but dust and clay; yet now that you profess to have repented, and to believe in Christ, and so to be entitled to the kingdom of heaven, you should live like yourselves, and scorn to stoop so low as to lick up the serpent's food; deporting yourselves as those who every moment look to be sent for, to go and take possession of your celestial crown. The very thoughts whereof should make you disdain the highest enjoyments that this world is able to afford you, as things not worthy to be compared with the glory that Christ hath procured for you. So that, let me tell you, so long as your thoughts and affections are taken up with anything upon earth, you act below yourselves, and unsuitable to your profession. For, tell me seriously, you that expect ere long to bathe yourselves in those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore, can it become you to drown yourselves in a deluge of carnal pleasures and sensual delights? You that have such a plenty of bread, and heavenly manna in your Father's house, is it not below you

to feed like the prodigal upon husks, with the swine of this world? You that hope ere long to trample upon the moon, and to be advanced above the stars themselves, is it fitting for you to lay under a clod of earth? In a word: you that expect ere long to be invested with all the bliss and happiness that a creature is capable of, is it a comely thing for you, in the meanwhile, to spend your time in running after shadows, and in playing with childish gewgaws; in raking in the dirt, or treading in the mire? Is this proper work for the heirs of heaven to be employed in? or is this to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called?" No, surely, and therefore so long as you suffer your affections to be bent upon the things below, you act below yourselves as men, much more as christians.

Hence, in the next place, the things upon earth being thus below you, they can never satisfy your desires; for nothing can do that but what is better than yourselves. Whereas all things here below are so far below you, that they deserve not to be regarded at all by you; and therefore, although you may have too much of them, you can never have enough of them; never so much as to satisfy your souls, and make you happy. Job compares this world to a cloud, Job xxx. 15; the psalmist compares it to wind, Psa. lxxviii. 39; and the prophet to smoke, Hos. xiii. 3. And who was ever yet satisfied with clouds, with wind, with smoke? But these things have something of reality in them, and therefore you may think to wring something of satisfaction from them; but who could ever yet be satisfied with nothing? But riches are nothing, as Solomon himself witnesseth, saying, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make

themselves wings," Prov. xxiii. 5 : and a greater than Solomon, even Christ himself, saying, "Who-soever hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he seemeth to have," Luke viii. 18, or that which he thinketh he hath. For the things of this world have no other existence but in our thoughts and fancies : abstract but the imagination, and they presently vanish and disappear ; so that you may easily wink the greatest beauty into blackness and deformity, earth's greatest light into darkness and obscurity. Think gold dirt, and it is so : think the pomp and grandeur of this transient world vanity, and it is so : and can such things, or rather nothings, which have no other existence but only in the roving fancies of deluded mortals ; can they, I say, ever satisfy an immortal soul ? No, certainly : although it should please Almighty God to give any one of you, not only one, but all the crowns and sceptres, all the kingdoms and empires of this world, you would be as far from being satisfied as you are or can be now ; yea, and further too : for the more you had, the more you would desire ; so that you can never rest contented, or fully satisfied, but only in the enjoyment of Him who is the centre of all perfections. And seeing all things upon earth can never afford any satisfaction to you, what reason have you to set your affections upon them ?

Especially considering that they are not only vain and unsatisfying, but troublesome and disquieting too. They are not only vanity, yea, "vanity of vanities," but they are "vexation of spirit also." For you cannot but all be sensible what cares you underwent to get, and what fears you are still in to keep what you have got ; so that trouble and vexation attend both the getting and preserving all earthly

enjoyments. You have an expression in Job, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow," Job xxxviii. 22. What is here meant by treasures of snow? St. Gregory tells you, the treasures of snow are "worldly riches, which men take a great deal of care and pains to gather together, as children do snow, with no small hazard of their lives; and having rolled it together into heaps, and fashioned them into the shapes of horses, or giants, and towers, they begin to fancy use, and power, and safety in them; but whilst they are mightily applauding and pleasing themselves in what they have gotten, there comes a shower, and washeth it all away; leaving nothing in the room of it but dirt and mire. And this is all they get for what they have done, even to be vexed and troubled for the loss of what they had got." I need not apply it, none of you but may do that yourselves from your own experience; which I am confident cannot but have taught you all, that there is more trouble and vexation, than of happiness and satisfaction, in all things here below; and therefore you must needs conclude them unworthy of your affections.

But if there was anything of usefulness in them to countervail the trouble you undergo for them, something might be said in excuse of your so eager pursuit of them; but alas! they are altogether as impertinent and unnecessary as they are troublesome and vexatious. First, they are unnecessary as to the making you truly happy; for happiness is a jewel that never yet was, nor ever will be found in the earth's bowels. As Job saith of wisdom, "The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me," Job xxviii. 14: so we may say of happiness: go to your wealth, and ask that for

happiness, and it will say, "It is not in me." Go to your carnal pleasure, and ask that for happiness, and that will say, "It is not in me." Go to all things that you have, or can desire on earth, and ask them for happiness, and they will all answer you with one accord, "It is not in us." Nay, the things of this world are so far from making us happy, that we can never be completely happy, until we leave them. For, where can you expect to be happy but in heaven: but in heaven, although you will have glory in its lustre, happiness in its perfection, yet not one dram of any earthly enjoyment. There is infinite light, and yet neither sun nor moon; there are glorious robes, and yet neither silks nor satins; there are rivers of pleasures, and yet neither wine nor water; there are most delicate banquets, feasts of fat things, and yet neither meat nor drink; there are large possessions, and yet neither house nor land; there is most ravishing beauty, and yet neither red nor white; there are rich treasures indeed, and yet neither gold nor silver. In one word; there is all of heaven, and yet nothing at all of earth. So little of happiness is couched under this clod of earth, that it keeps us from it, rather than helps us to it.

And then, as the things on earth cannot make us happy themselves, so neither can they conduce to our being made so. For who ever yet could swim to heaven in a deluge of carnal pleasures, or was blown thither by the breath of popularity? Whom did you ever hear of, that purchased an inheritance in the land of Canaan, out of his revenue in this wilderness? or transported his goods from this city into that which is above, so as to exchange them there for crowns of glory, and sceptres of eternal righteousness? If this was feasible, then I should

not wonder that men are so eager for the world, so covetous for the greatness of it. But do not deceive yourselves, you are never the nearer heaven for standing higher upon earth; nor in more likelihood to be rich to eternity, because you are so in time. I confess, if you have ten talents, and improve them all well, you shall be made rulers over ten cities. If you have much here below, and lay it all out for your Master's use, for the glory of God, a richer crown of glory will be set upon your heads. But observe and remember it, it is your using, not your having of this world's goods, that will enhance your glory; but your having without using them, will but increase your misery and torment. And seeing it is so hard to use them aright, you have but little cause to be so desirous of them; especially considering that our Saviour himself, by whom alone it is possible for us to come to heaven, saith in express terms, that "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xix. 23, 24, and "with men," saith he, "this is impossible; but with God all things are possible," Matt. xix. 26: whereby he intimates to us, that nothing less than the extraordinary and infinite power of God can enable a rich man to carry himself, and improve his estate so, as ever to come to heaven, by reason of the strong temptations which they are continually subject to. Or, however this be, surely our Saviour in these words suggests to us, that it is more difficult for a rich man than for a poor man to get to heaven; and, by consequence, that his riches are no furtherance, but rather an hinderance, in his way thither: which did you but seriously consider, methinks you should rather fear than desire wealth; and be so far from setting your affections upon the things upon earth,

as to make them the object of your hatred and detestation.

In the last place, consider how fleeting and inconstant the things of this world always were, still are, and ever will be to the end of the world. You heard even now what they are compared to by God himself, even to wind, to smoke, and clouds; and tell me, what sooner vanisheth than smoke? what is sooner scattered than a cloud? and what is more inconstant than the wind? All ages have afforded you instances of this kind, even of the instability and uncertainty of all things here below. First, David was mounted up to the highest pinnacle of honour, the Israelites crying out, "We have ten parts in the king," 2 Sam. xix. 43; but, in the first verse of the next chapter, the wind was turned into another quarter; for Sheba did but blow a trumpet, and they presently cry out, "We have no part in David," 2 Sam. xx. 1: thus he was cried up and down with the same breath. Thus whilst Belshazzar was gulping down his frolic cups, and taking his fill of earthly pleasures, there appears but an handwriting upon the wall, and the man immediately falls a trembling. Thus Herod comes out in all his pomp, and sits upon his throne in all his glory, and God sends but a company of contemptible worms, and they destroy his highness and honour too, Acts xii. 23. Thus methinks I see the rich man in the gospel stirring up his pillow, and composing himself to rest: methinks I hear him singing his pleasing requiem to his soul; "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years:" but before he was warm in his bed, or his song well ended, behold, there comes a voice from heaven, saying, "Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of

thee!" Luke xii. 19, 20. But I need not have gone so far for instances of this nature ; but I dare appeal to your own knowledge and experience in this case ; there being none of you but have frequently already, and many still hear each day of such examples as these are. From whence you cannot but conclude, that the world, and all the glory of it, is but a mere piece of pageantry, that is still passing away from one to another, and presently is out of sight. All things upon earth being in continual motion, constant in nothing but inconstancy.

Now put these things together, and seriously consider with yourselves, how mean and base, how vain and empty, how troublesome and vexatious, how impertinent and unnecessary, how fleeting and unconstant all things upon earth are, and then tell me, whether you really think them worthy of your affections ? or that it is worth your while to spend your time in the eager prosecution of them ? I know, if you will but consult your severer judgments, you cannot but look upon all things here below as beneath you to look upon ; as things that deserve not your serious thoughts, much less your time and strength to be spent upon them : and therefore, I hope I need not use any more arguments to persuade you to call in your affections from all things here below. However, give me leave to mind you of the apostle's saying, that " covetousness is idolatry," Col. iii. 5 ; and that whoever minds earthly things is a shame to the gospel, and an enemy to the cross of Christ, Phil. iii. 18, 19 ; and, by consequence, in setting your affections upon them, you thwart God's intentions in giving of them ; who gave them not but that you should improve them for his glory. And, therefore, have a care lest your table become

a snare, and your earthly wealth an occasion of your eternal ruin. Have a care lest in catching at the shadow, you lose the substance, and exchange your future happiness for present misery. And, therefore, be sure to "set your affections on things above, and not on things upon the earth."

2. But it is not enough that your affections be not upon the things that are upon earth, unless they be upon those things that are in heaven. And, therefore, it is this which the apostle puts here in the first place, the other signifying nothing without this: for, as it avails us nothing to take off our affection from some things here below, unless we take them off from all, so neither will it avail us anything, though we take off our affections from all things here below, unless we set them all upon those things that are above. But this is one of the hardest tasks that a christian hath to do; but it is that which, unless a man doth do, he is no christian: this being the specifical difference betwixt a christian and another man, that the one lives by sense, and not by faith; the other by faith, and not by sense: and, therefore, the one minds earth only, and not heaven; the other minds heaven only, and not earth. And, therefore, if you desire not to play with religion, as the generality of people do, but to be christians indeed, real saints, such as Christ will accept of when you come into another world, then you must resolve without any more ado, not only to leave doting upon the things which are below, but to perform the whole that is here enjoined, even "to set your affections upon things above," as well as "not on things on earth."

For the opening whereof, we shall first consider

the reasons why our affections should be in heaven; and then what affections should be there.

(1.) Why should our affections be upon those things that are above? All the reason in the world for it; because there is nothing made or designed as a proper object for your affections, but only the things that are in heaven: especially, if you look upon yourselves as christians, you must needs grant that heaven is the only place where your thoughts and affections should always dwell; for where should your affections be, but where your relations are? and your hearts, but where your treasure is? But are you christians? then,

[1.] Your relations are such as are in heaven; There is your Father, who begat you to a new life, and continually provideth for you; there is that "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all," Gal. iv. 26; there are all our brethren, the saints of the living God; yea, our elder Brother himself, even Jesus Christ, who is called "the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29: for thither it was that he ascended, when he left these lower regions of the world. "I ascend," saith he, "unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God," John xx. 17. There he hath been ever since, and still is, preparing a place for us, as he did for those who are already with him. There are the ancient patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; there are all the martyrs and saints of God, even all that ever lived and died in the faith of Christ, they are now in heaven, with one heart and voice, singing forth the praises of the most high God, and of the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne for evermore. And, amongst the rest, thou mayest have a father or mother, a husband or wife, a son or

a daughter, or some very near of kin unto thee, now divested of those other relations, and having taken upon them that of brotherhood. These, and ten thousand times ten thousand more, are now in heaven, there solacing themselves in the enjoyment of the chiefest good, whilst we, their younger brethren, not being yet fully come to age, are still in this lower world, grappling with its lusts, and striving against the temptations of it. But, however, though our Father who is in heaven doth not yet see good to admit us into that blessed society of the spirits of just men made perfect, not being as yet fitted and qualified sufficiently for it; yet it is his will and pleasure that our hearts be amongst them, although our persons cannot: and that we still be thinking of them, and longing to come unto them, and to be made partakers with them of their celestial glories. In short, our affections should be with them in heaven, even whilst our bodies are upon the earth, so as to be every moment preparing ourselves for that blessed time, when we shall bid adieu to all things upon earth, and go up to take possession of our inheritance in heaven.

[2.] Secondly, as you are christians, not only your relations, but your possessions too, are only in heaven; neither is there anything upon earth that is worth the owning in itself, much less in comparison of what is reserved for you in heaven. But here, I hope, I need not spend much time in showing you, that a christian's treasure is only in heaven; for, are you christians, and yet look for your treasures here? Do you think that the heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ, have their portion only in this life? or that Christ came from heaven only that you might live pleasantly upon earth? and

was reproached and despised, only that you might be honoured and applauded by men? I dare say there are none of you who have such mean thoughts of Christ as these are, but expect nothing less than true, real, solid, and eternal happiness from him. I know also you would not willingly have your portion in this life; but whatever your present estates are, you desire better and greater in the world to come, even the same which Christ hath purchased with his own most precious blood: and which our brethren who are gone before, are already invested with in the highest heavens, where they behold God face to face, and enjoy all those infinite and enamouring perfections which are concentrated in him, which God intended at first as the only object of our felicity. And if these do not, what can deserve your affections from you?

(2.) And so I come to the next thing proposed, and that is, What are those affections which we ought to set upon the things that are above? For the understanding of which, give me leave to call to your minds the extent and latitude of the word *προσείτε*, here used in my text, which, as I told you, hath respect to both the chief faculties of the soul, the understanding and the will. And so when we are commanded to “set our affections on things above,” it is not to be understood only of the acts of the understanding, which we call consideration, meditation, and the like, but likewise of the several motions of the will, which come under the name of passions or affections. Now, there being a double object for the will of man to work upon, good and evil, there is likewise a double faculty to be considered in it: the one we call a concupiscible, the other an irascible faculty; by the one we follow that

which is good, by the other we run from that which is evil. Now, there being nothing of evil above, there is nothing there for our irascible passions to do, or work upon; and so grief, hatred, fear, and such like passions or affections, are excluded from the number of those which we ought to set upon things above. But good being there in its beauty and perfection, the other affections, whereby the will embraceth what is good, are chiefly to be exercised, and in the highest pitch and degree that they can possibly be raised to. Now, the first act, which the will puts forth to that which is presented to it under the notion of good, is that affection which we commonly call love; which is indeed the fountain of all the other affections, and streams itself into them, according to the several circumstances which the object may lay under. As, for example, if what we apprehend to be good, be present with us, the affection of love embraceth it with joy; if absent from us, it issues forth itself into desire: but if the distance be still greater, yet so that it is attainable, it puts forth itself into hope. Which things being thus premised, it is easy to show what affections are to be placed upon "those things that are above."

[1.] For, first, if we consider the word as it respects the understanding, so it imports that our thoughts and meditations are principally to be taken up with the affairs of the world to come, and with those transcendent glories which are above; so that your most serious thoughts are still to be spent upon those most serious things. Thus David describes a good man by his delighting in the law of the Lord, and meditating in that law both day and night, Psa. i. 2; implying, that his great care is how to get to heaven. And therefore, whilst others are

busying themselves about the impertinences of this transient life, the soul that is truly pious employs its thoughts and studies about the happiness of heaven, and the way that leads unto it; his body may be with his friends below, but his head and his heart are with his God above. And if any of you desire to manifest yourselves to be christians indeed, you must not look at, or mind the things that are seen, but those things that are not seen; as knowing that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 18. You must not suffer your thoughts to creep any longer upon this dunghill earth, but refine your drossy, and raise up your drowsy spirits to behold, contemplate, and admire the glories that are in heaven: for which end it is necessary that you often retire from the cares and bustles of this tumultuous world, and bid your earthly thoughts farewell, commanding them to stay below, while your aspiring souls go up to take a view of what is above; where, having fixed yourselves among the choir of saints and angels, cast your rolling eyes about, and take an exact survey of the land of Canaan, that flows with milk and honey. Look well, for you cannot but behold such transcendent light and glory, that your eyes will be dazzled, and your hearts astonished at it. And if you do but listen with an attentive and believing ear, you cannot but hear such melodious music, and celestial concert, as will be sure to ravish and transport your spirits beyond themselves. And do but rightly weigh and consider what is there, and you will find that there is not only the blessed company of the spirits of just men made perfect, together with angels, archangels, cherubim, and seraphim, with the rest of the celestial hierarchy,

but there is Christ and God himself; whom to know, is the only wisdom; whom to serve, is the only freedom; and whom to enjoy, is the only happiness that any creature is capable of. And who would not dwell in the ravishing contemplations of such rare perfections as these?

[2.] In the next place, when your heads are thus got into heaven amongst those things that are above, you must be sure to send your hearts after them. I mean the affection of love, which cannot but be inflamed with beholding such transcendent beauty and glory as that is. And, therefore, do but seriously bethink and consider with yourselves what really there is, and you cannot but love to be in heaven. There is the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Cause of all causes, the best of all goods, and the centre of all perfections; there are wisdom and power, justice and mercy, grace and goodness, love and purity, glory and eternity, all together: there is He who made you, he who preserveth you, and he who redeemed you too. There is He who left the sweetness of his Father's bosom, and all to come and die for you; there is he who laid down his own life to ransom yours, and died in time that you might live for ever; there is he who gave his body to be broken that you might eat it, and his blood to be shed, that you might mystically drink of it; there is he who mourned, that you might rejoice, and became miserable, to make you happy; there is he who easeth you of all your dolorous complaints, and cures you of all your mournful sadness; who supplies your wants, dispels your fears, and averts your danger from the wrath of an incensed God. In short, there is Christ now making intercession for your souls in heaven, as he once made satisfaction for your sins on

earth. And whilst I am speaking, and you thinking, I hope, upon these things, do not your hearts wax hot within you? while you are thus musing, doth not the fire kindle? are not your hearts even snatched from you, and your souls transported into flames of love? Certainly, if they be not, it is because they are not in heaven, and you do not rightly consider what is there; which I am confident none can do, but he must needs be in love with what he there beholds; these things being the only objects which our love was made to be placed upon.

[3.] In the next place, having your affection of love fixed upon those glories that are above, I need not tell you that your desires must be carried after them. For as you cannot behold them without loving, so you cannot love them without desiring of them; they being so infinitely lovely in themselves, and yet for the present at some distance from us, which should make us long and thirst after nothing in the world so much as to come nearer and nearer to them, until at length we come into the full enjoyment of them. For if the dark glimpses and transient glances of heaven's glory be so strangely ravishing, what will the clear vision be? If the very believing of it fills us, as the apostle saith, "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," what shall we think of the full possession of it? even that it is infinitely more than we are able to think of. The consideration whereof should make us, methinks, even forget the world and all things in it, and desire nothing but to get to heaven. Thus St. Paul, when he had been rapt up into the third heaven, and had heard and seen something of what is there done, what was his life after but a continued breathing out, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be

with Christ." Thus David, having once tasted a little of "those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore," how pathetically doth he after cry out, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God!" Psa. xlii. 1, 2. And you, and I, who are so apt to be overwhelmed with cares and fears, and always subject to sin and vanity, could we but now and then, in our aspiring and believing thoughts, get up to heaven, and there contemplate those eternal mansions which Christ himself hath purchased, and is now preparing for us, we should soon be weary of this deceitful world, and desire to be taken from it: we should soon join with the sweet singer of Israel, and say, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away, and be at rest;" then would I mount above the stars themselves, and there my soul should rest, and take its fill of joy and pleasure, in the enjoyment of the chiefest good. And verily, until your desires be in some measure thus carried after the joys of heaven, you are not only far from performing the duty in my text, but you are as yet far from true piety and religion; which cannot consist without real and sincere desires of serving God on earth, and enjoying him in heaven.

But you may say, Heaven is a great way off, and you know not how long it may be before you can get to it, and, therefore, what need we trouble ourselves so much about it yet? To that I answer, It is true indeed, heaven is a great way off from you that dwell on earth: but, however, although it be above your sight, it is not above your hope; and, therefore, in the next place, that affection of hope should fix itself

in heaven, even whilst we are on earth, which is the only time wherein we can exert this grace: for when we come to heaven, as our faith will be turned into vision, so will our hope be swallowed up of fruition, Rom. viii. 24. And, indeed, as there is nothing so worthy of our love, so neither is there anything that we have such grounds to hope for, as the things that are above; for we have no ground to hope for anything here below, because we have no promise for it. But that all those who repent and believe the gospel shall go to heaven, we have the infallible word and promise of God, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. And what ground can we have in the world whereon to anchor our hopes firmer, or so firm, as this is? And, therefore, we have no cause to despond or despair of it. Let us but repent of our former sins, and for the future fear God and keep his commandments, believing in Jesus Christ for the acceptance both of our persons and duties, and then we cannot miss of the glories which we have now been speaking of. And, therefore, whilst some hope for riches, others for the honours of this world; whilst some hope to live pleasantly, others to live long upon earth; let us hope, in and through Christ, to live eternally in heaven, yea, so as to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 2.

[4.] And so I come to the last affection which is to be set upon the things above, even our joy, which you must not suffer to be crawling upon earth whilst the others are soaring aloft in heaven; where, and where alone, the proper objects of our joy are: but, supposing your other affections to be placed upon

those things that are above, it is impossible for you not to rejoice in them ; yea, the very thoughts of your having such transcendent glory purchased and prepared for you, cannot but be extraordinarily pleasing and delightful to you. And although you have not as yet, nor can see them, but as “through a glass darkly,” yet, believing in them, you cannot but “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,” 1 Pet. i. 8. Nay, more than that, the self-same joy which the angels have, and you expect, in heaven, the same you are bound in duty to solace yourselves in whilst you are here below. For, whom do the angels and glorified saints rejoice in, but only in the living God ? in whom you are commanded to rejoice here as well as there. “Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice,” Phil. iv. 4 ; so that we are bound to rejoice in the Lord always, when we have, and when we have not anything else to rejoice in ; so as always to say with the prophet, “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,” Hab. iii. 17, 18. And so we may say, moreover, although all things upon earth do frown upon me, and my very friends be turned against me ; although my estate fail me, and all my honours be taken from me ; although my health and strength decay, and I have nothing in this world to help me, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and solace myself, and comfort my heart with the believing thoughts of that eternal happiness which, ere long, shall be conferred upon me.

Thus, having shown you how you ought to set your affections upon those things that are above, so as always to be thinking of them, with love unto them, thirsting after them, hoping for them, and rejoicing in them: I should now come to apply what I have said, but that I hope you have done it to my hands; being now so thoroughly persuaded of the excellency of those things that are above, beyond whatever is here below, that you are already resolved within yourselves to call in all your scattered affections from all things here below, wherein they have hitherto been entangled, and to centre them all in heaven, and in that perfection of glory and happiness which is there, and only there, to be enjoyed. Which if you were truly resolved upon, and by the assistance of God would perform such resolutions, what holy lives would you then lead, and what happy creatures would you then be! The world would then be no snare unto you, nor its pomps and vanities entice you to sin; for your eyes would be so much dazzled with beholding the glory of heaven, that everything else would seem but blackness and darkness to you. The pleasures of this world would soon seem brutish, its honours despicable, and its riches so poor and mean, that they deserve to be the object rather of our scorn than covetousness; and so disdaining to be so low-spirited as to mind or regard such childish trifles, and throw away our precious and shortlived days upon such frivolous and tormenting vanities, as all things are which are here below, we should rather devote ourselves to serving God, and please ourselves in pleasing him.

And as this would be the way to become holy, so

would it lead us to be happy too ; not only because grace and glory, holiness and happiness, attend each other, but likewise in that our very happiness itself consists in the performing this one duty, even in setting our affections upon things above, and not on those things which are upon the earth. For all the misery and trouble that befall us here, ariseth only from our affections being placed here. For if you did not love and desire the world, you would neither be proud that you have it, nor sorry when you lose it ; your hearts not being set upon it, they would not be troubled for parting with it. And, therefore, let things fall how they will, your love and joy being only in heaven, nothing upon earth can deprive you of it.

Wherefore, as ever any of you desire to know what it is to be free from misery, or to be truly happy, set upon the performance of this duty ; “ set your affections on things above, and not on things upon the earth : ” which could we all do, what happy souls should we then be ! and how should we smile to see poor silly mortals trudging up and down the world, encompassing both sea and land to search for happiness, and not finding it ; whilst we enjoy it in our own breasts, by having our affections placed upon God and the things above ! And whilst others trouble and torment themselves with needless fears and jealousies about future events, our hearts would be fixed, trusting in the Lord. Whatever storms and tempests arise without us, there would still be calmness and tranquillity within ; whatever happens in the world, to the grief and trouble of those that love it, it would not touch or reach us, whose minds, whose thoughts,

whose hearts, whose affections, are all above it. By this means we should live in heaven whilst we are on earth, in spite of all the opposition that men or devils could make against us. And it is not long but where our hearts now are, our souls shall be, even in the highest heavens, rejoicing in the enjoyment of the chief Good, and singing forth his praises for evermore.

PERPETUAL REJOICING THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 4.

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAY; AND AGAIN I SAY, REJOICE.

HE who aims at true piety and virtue, that he may be meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, must begin with his heart, and take special care that all be right there: for, as Solomon observeth, "Out of the heart are the issues of life," Prov. iv. 23; and a greater than Solomon, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. xii. 34. All our words and actions have their rise in the heart, and from thence issue forth into the life; and therefore God hath given such laws to our hearts, that if they were but duly observed, all his other commandments would be pleasant and easy: for they all tend to the directing the several motions of our hearts towards himself, that they may all meet and centre in him, as they were at first designed to do. Thus he commands, that our thoughts be always running upon him, and our desires carried after him; that we live with a constant fear and reverence of his glory and power, and with a sure trust and confidence in his goodness and truth; that we love him with all our hearts and souls, so as to have no love for anything else, but in obedience and subordination to him: and if we do that, it follows in course, that we must also rejoice in him; for that we cannot choose but do it in what we love.

And as we are to love him always, so we are always to rejoice in him : which, notwithstanding that we may be the more sure to do, he hath here, by his apostle, given us a particular command about it, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord alway." And the better to enforce it upon us, he repeats it again; "and again I say, Rejoice."

Which being a duty that the best of men are sometimes apt to forget, or at least to be deficient in, I shall endeavour to explain it more particularly to you, that ye may know how you may and ought to "rejoice in the Lord alway." For which purpose, taking the words as an entire proposition, as they are of themselves, without troubling you about their coherence with what goes before, or follows them, we may briefly consider,

I. What it is properly "to rejoice in the Lord."

II. Who are here commanded to do it.

III. How they should "rejoice in the Lord."

IV. That this is to be done always.

V. How we may; and, why we ought to do it.

Unto which few heads, all, I think, may be referred, that is necessary to be known concerning these words, and the great duty contained in them.

I. What it is properly to rejoice, we may all understand by our own experience, better than by any definition or description that can be given of it; for when we apprehend anything to be good and agreeable to us, we feel in ourselves a secret kind of complacency and delight in the enjoyment of it, which none can perceive but ourselves; according to that word of the wise man, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness: and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy," Prov. xiv. 10.

But here we must observe, that the joy here

spoken of, is no way like the pleasure which ariseth from our senses or fancy being duly touched by their proper objects: for such sensual pleasures do not affect us as men, but only as animals, and so are common to us with the beasts that perish. But true joy is seated only in the soul, or rational part of man, as such; and is a serious, grave, sedate, severe thing, that supports and cheers the heart, and overspreads it with an inward peace, quiet, and satisfaction, arising from something that is of the nature of the soul itself, spiritual and immaterial; and so good and proper for it, that the whole soul is composed, refreshed, and delighted with the sight and fruition of it.

But this nothing in the world can do, but God, the chiefest good, who hath made our souls of such a temper, and of so large capacities, that nothing can fill and satiate them but himself; and therefore, intending himself to be the only object of their joy and happiness, hath made nothing capable of contributing towards it, any further than by discovering his Divine perfections to us, that we may be able to see so much of him, as may fill our hearts with joy and comfort in him: but still it is only in him that we can truly rejoice, as we are here commanded to do.

II. This will give us some light into the next question to be considered, **even** who are here commanded to "rejoice in the Lord:" for it is plain that neither the unclean spirits, nor wicked or sinful men, can do it if they would: for although they have the same powers and faculties in their souls as other men have, yet, by conversing with nothing but the things of this world, they are so immersed in matter, that they are not capable of any sort of spiritual

joy; and being disordered and out of tune, they are so disagreeable and contrary to the holy nature of God, that they cannot possibly rejoice in him, nor so much as think of him without horror and confusion. "The wicked," as the prophet observes, "are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isa. lvii. 20, 21, nor can be, so long as they are wicked. They may seem to live at ease, and may enjoy the pleasures, as they are called, of this life; they may, like the rich man in the gospel, "be clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day;" they may laugh and be merry, and look as if they were the happiest people upon earth; yet all this while they have no true peace and joy in their hearts; for they can never rejoice in the Lord; he is not in all their thoughts. Or if he happen to come in, as he sometimes may, against their wills, they are so far from rejoicing, that they are terrified and troubled at it: for being conscious to themselves that they have offended him, and still continue to do so, they can see nothing in him but wrath and vengeance; and therefore, instead of rejoicing, they should rather be afflicted, and mourn, and weep for their sins, so as to repent of them, and turn with all their hearts unto the Lord, that they may be capable of rejoicing in him, which till then they are not.

I could not forbear to take notice of this, though, at the same time, it puts me into a great fear, that all I shall say upon this subject will be lost as to a great part of the congregation, if not to the greatest, even to all such who are still in their sins, who have not their eyes yet opened, so as "to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto

God :” for such will not be able to understand what I say, nor know what I mean by rejoicing in the Lord ; they could never do it themselves, and therefore cannot imagine how others should. So that all such, I fear, will go out of the church just as they came in, without being any ways affected with what they hear.

But however, in the midst of my fears, I have some hope, that whilst I am speaking to your ears, Almighty God may open some of your hearts, to see the things which belong to your everlasting peace ; and how much it concerns you, in interest as well as duty, to leave off your sins, and to strive all ye can to get into the number of those happy souls, who always may, and are always bound to “rejoice in the Lord.”

III. But whatever may be the issue as to such, there are some, I hope, here present, who are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. These will be glad to hear of their duty, that they may better know how to do it, especially such a duty as this, which is likewise their happiness and privilege. These also will soon apprehend what is said about rejoicing in the Lord, it being a thing which they frequently do : and having often felt the sweetness of it, they will be the more easily persuaded to do it always, as they are here commanded.

For that this command is given to the saints, and to them only, is plain, in that the apostle writes only to them. He directs this epistle “to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi,” Phil. i. 1 ; and looking upon them as his brethren in Christ, he saith to them, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord,” Phil. iii. 1. And again, in the begin-

ning of this chapter, he calls them "his brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, his joy and crown;" which none could be but the saints before mentioned: and to them he here saith, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." And so the Scripture all along calls upon the saints, or righteous, and upon none else, to rejoice in the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous," said David, "for praise is comely for the upright," *Psa.* xxxiii. 1; xcvi. 12: for the upright, not for the wicked and unrighteous; grief and sorrow become them better than joy and praise. And elsewhere, he saith to God, "Let all those that put their trust in thee, rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name, be joyful in thee," *Psa.* v. 11. They who love him, as be sure all his saints and servants do, they must needs be joyful in him, for that very reason, because they love him, and because they are here commanded to "rejoice in the Lord alway."

"Rejoice in the Lord," in Jehovah, the almighty and everlasting God; the first cause of all things; the chiefest and only good, and so the only object of all true joy. Rejoice in his wisdom, which is infinite; in his power, which is boundless; in his word, which is infallible; in his judgments, which are unsearchable; in his name, which is great, wonderful, and holy; in his goodness, which is over all his works.

"Rejoice in the Lord;" the Maker of heaven and earth; who commanded all things out of nothing, by the word of his power; who hung the earth upon nothing; gave bounds to the sea; life and breath to animals; being to all things that be: who spread out the heavens like a curtain, and therein set the

sun and moon, and an innumerable company of stars, giving them light, and heat, and laws which cannot be broken : who made man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, whereby he became a living soul, capable of reflecting upon, and rejoicing in him that made him. " Let Israel rejoice in him that made him ; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King," *Psa. cxlix. 2.* " For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work : I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works ! thy thoughts are very deep," *Psa. xcii. 4, 5.*

" Rejoice in the Lord ;" the almighty Preserver of the whole world ; who upholdeth all things he made, with the power of the same word by which he made them ; who causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of men ; who giveth food to all flesh, and blesseth it to the maintenance and support of life. " God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," *Psa. xli. 1.* " He is my strength and my shield ; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped : therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ; and with my song will I praise him," *Psa. xxviii. 7.* " Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice," *Psa. lxi. 7.*

" Rejoice in the Lord ;" the Lord of the whole earth ; the Lord of all the world, who rules and reigns over all things that are, and doth whatever he pleaseth in heaven and in earth, in the sea and all deep places ; ordering and disposing of all and everything that is, with such infinite wisdom and goodness, that nothing can happen but what shall tend some way or other to the glory of his great name, and to the benefit of all those who serve and

honour him. How then can such forbear to be glad and rejoice in him! "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof," *Psa. xcvi. 1.* "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth," *Psa. lxxv. 4.*

Above all, "rejoice in the Lord" our Saviour; "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe," *1 Tim. iv. 10*; the strength, the God of our salvation; our salvation itself: for "the Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation," *Psa. cxviii. 14.* The very naming of which is enough to fill our hearts with joy and gladness, as much and more than they are able to hold: that the almighty Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the whole world in general, should, in a particular and wonderful manner, become the Saviour, yea, the salvation of mankind: that he for that purpose should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a woman, so as to be both "perfect God, and perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting:" that having thus taken our nature upon him, he in that should perform exact obedience to his own laws, and then offer it up as a sacrifice for our transgressions of them: that as he was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification: that he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: that being raised from the dead, he went up into heaven, and was there set at the right hand of God the Father, the next in power and honour to him: that the man Christ Jesus is there exalted above all the creatures in the world, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to him: that he is now there appearing

in the presence of God for us, the Mediator between God and us, our Advocate with the Father, ever living to make intercession for us: that we have such a glorious, such an almighty Saviour in heaven, continually taking care of all things necessary to bring us thither: that he is therefore making such effectual intercession for us, by virtue of the death he suffered for our sins, that they are all forgiven for his name's sake: that he is there exalted by the right hand of God, to be a Prince, as well as a Saviour, to give repentance also, as well as forgiveness of sins: that nothing can happen in the world by the general providence of God, but he is there ready to bless it to us, and make it turn to our advantage: that by him we have access to God the Father, and can truly call him our God and our Father too: that whatever we ask in his name, we are sure to have it, so far as it is good for us: that he from thence supplies us with all things necessary both for life and godliness, that we may never want anything that can contribute to our sanctification and salvation by him: that he from thence sends down his Holy Spirit upon us, and so by it is always present with us, to direct us what to do, and to assist us in the doing of it: that his grace is always sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness, so that "we can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us:" that he also, as the Sun of righteousness in heaven, reflects such a lustre upon what we do, that although we be imperfect in ourselves, yet we are accepted as righteous through him:—in short, that he is now in heaven preparing a place for us, that we may live with him there, and rejoice in him for ever.

Can we hear all this, and our hearts not burn

within us? How well might the angel say to the shepherds, at the birth of Christ, "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy that shall be to all people!"

For what greater joy can there be than this, that we have such a Saviour, who is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him?" How well then may we say, with the blessed virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!" and with the prophet, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness!" Isa. lxi. 10; and with the psalmist, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms!" Psa. xcv. 1, 2; and with the apostle in my text, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice!"

IV. "Rejoice in the Lord alway;" or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "Rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v. 16. This is not a duty to be performed only now and then, but at all times, upon all occasions, in all conditions; whatever happens, we must still take care to keep our hearts in such a temper that we may rejoice in the Lord, whether we have, or have not anything else to rejoice in. It is the wise man's advice, "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider," Eccl. vii. 14. When we prosper in the world, and all things fall out according to our desire, it is an easy matter to be joyful, and we commonly are so; but it is not so easy then to rejoice in the Lord. but rather the

more difficult. For when he gives us all things richly to enjoy, we are apt to set our hearts upon them, and to take so much pleasure in them, that we forget Him who gave them; so that it is a very difficult thing to get, and keep our hearts in such a frame, that in the midst of all our temporal enjoyments, we can rejoice in the Lord more than in them, and in them only as they come from him, and are tokens of his love and favour to us; which, therefore, we should strive all we can to do, that we may not take up with the seeming pleasures of the world, instead of that real and substantial joy which is to be had in Him who gave them, and who gave them on purpose that we might rejoice the more in him.

And if they who are in adversity would rightly consider, they will find that they have then also cause to rejoice in the Lord, the same as when they are in the greatest prosperity; forasmuch as that also is a sign of that fatherly care and love that he hath for all his sons and servants; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6. And who can but rejoice in every token of God's love, and in him who is pleased to show it; especially when any trouble befalls them for his sake, and he enables them to bear it to his honour and glory? This is so great a favour, that the disciples rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," Acts v. 41; and St. Paul could truly say, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake," 2 Cor. xii. 10. To some people these may seem strange things for a man to take pleasure in; but they who are the faithful servants of Jesus Christ, find so much pleasure in doing and suffering anything they

can for him, that they have little or no sense of the suffering; but the suffering is swallowed up with the joy they have in him, for honouring them so far as to lay it upon them for his own sake.

But, after all, it is much the same thing as to our rejoicing in the Lord, the chiefest good, whether we have or have not the good things, as they are called, here below; for if we have them, they can afford us no manner of comfort without him; and if we have them not, we can rejoice in him as much as if we had, or rather more. For being all naturally desirous of joy and comfort, and having nothing else from whence we can have it, but only God, our own inclinations will put us upon applying ourselves to him for it, which otherwise, perhaps, we should not think of; which may be one great reason wherefore God is often pleased to deny the comforts of this life to his best and dearest children, even lest they should take up with them, instead of him; with the streams, instead of the fountain. Also that they may always rejoice in him, and in him alone; which they endeavour, therefore, all they can to do, in the midst of all the changes and chances of this mortal life; whether they have more or less; whether he gives or takes from them; whether they live in plenty or poverty, in honour or disgrace; whether he grants or disappointeth them of their expectations and desires, it is all one to them: they can still sing with the prophet, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii. 17, 18.

Oh divine temper of mind ! Thrice happy they who can attain unto it ! But,

V. How is it possible that we should thus rejoice in the Lord ? We, who are frail and sinful creatures ! We, who are tossed to and fro with so many storms and tempests ! We, who never continue in one stay ! We, who are so often ruffled and discomposed by one cross accident or other ! though we may perhaps sometimes rejoice in the Lord, how is it possible that we should do it always ! To this I answer, that whatever God hath commanded us to do, it is possible for us to do it, otherwise he would not have commanded it. But as we can keep none of his commandments without great care and diligence ; so neither can we keep this, except we set ourselves in good earnest about it, and use all such means as conduce any way towards it.

Among which the first is, that “we keep our consciences always void of offence both towards God and towards man.” For he whose conscience accuseth him of any habitual sin and offence against God, can look upon God no otherwise than as angry and displeased with him ; and, therefore, instead of rejoicing in him, will rather be troubled at the thoughts of him ; like the devils, who “believe and tremble.” But, as I observed before, this command is given only to such whose hearts are right with God, and can therefore say with his apostle, “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world,” 2 Cor. i. 12.

But such also, in order to their rejoicing always in the Lord, must keep a strict watch over themselves, and live as much as it is possible above the

temper of their own bodies. For while we are in the body, our souls are subject to the humours that are predominant in it; some of which are very apt to impede and hinder us in the exercise of so spiritual a duty as this is. The sanguine are too airy for such solid joys, and the melancholy too dull and heavy for such high flights as are necessary to our reaching of them. I do not deny but that a little melancholy may be sometimes as good as ballast to a ship, to keep it steady; but too much is apt to sink the soul into so much grief and sorrow, that it is very difficult for it to raise up itself so high as to rejoice at all, much less in God himself. And, therefore, they who are subject to this distemper, must take special heed that they do not give way to it, nor indulge themselves, as they commonly do, in it; but must do all they can to suppress it, or at least to keep it so much under, that it may not overpower the soul, and divert it from thinking upon God, and rejoicing in him. Which they may and ought to do, in the midst of all those dismal and troublesome thoughts, which this black humour is apt to suggest into them, so as to be able to say with David, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul," Psa. xciv. 19. And with the apostle: "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing," 2 Cor. vi. 10. Though, as men, they are full of grief and sorrow; yet, as christians, at the same time, they rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation.

For christians, as such, are always the same, not carried about with every wind that blows without them, nor with every humour that moves within them; but always sedate and calm, and so in a right

disposition to enjoy God, and rejoice in him, in whatever state or condition they are. This is that which the apostle here requires in this very case; for, having said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," he adds, in the very next verse, "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand." Let your equanimity, or evenness of temper in all conditions, be so constant and apparent, that all men may see it, and the Lord too, who is at hand to assist you in it, and ere long will reward you for it. But for that purpose, he adds also, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," Phil. iv. 6. Whereby is intimated, that in order to our rejoicing in the Lord, as is before commanded, we must not suffer our hearts to be distracted with the cares of this life, but let them hang loose and indifferent to all things here below, and fixed only upon God. We must live above this world, and have our conversation in heaven, where only these true joys are to be found; otherwise we can never have them.

For this purpose, therefore, if riches increase, set not your hearts upon them: if honours, suffer not yourselves to be puffed up with the conceit of them: if worldly pleasures, look not upon them as they come, but as they go, and leave a sting behind them: if troubles or afflictions befall you, consider whence they come, and whither they tend; that they come from your heavenly Father, are designed for your good, and will effect it too, if you do but make a right use of them; that these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17; that "all things work together for good to

them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. Thus nothing can happen, but ye have cause to rejoice in the Lord, and thank him for it.

Remember, also, the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said to his disciples, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy," John xvi. 20. For this is an exceeding great comfort in the midst of all our sorrow, that our sorrow will not only have an end, but it will end in joy, and in joy too that will never have an end; and all through the goodness and mercy of God, in whom therefore we have always infinite cause to rejoice, more than we can ever have to be sorrowful for anything in the world.

The greatest and truest cause of sorrow is sin: that we have broken the laws, dishonoured the name, and so have incurred the displeasure of Almighty God: for this we can never be sorrowful enough; yet, nevertheless, in the midst of this godly sorrow also, we have infinite cause to rejoice in the Lord our God and Saviour, in that he himself hath reconciled us to himself by his own blood; that he, in our nature, suffered the punishment which was due unto our sins, and is now a propitiation for them at the right hand of the Father: that in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, of all our sins: they were all laid upon him, and therefore none of them shall be charged upon us: for "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing,

we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,"
1 Pet. i. 8.

This is joy unspeakable indeed, and so full of glory, that the world knows nothing of it: none but those who live with a constant and firm belief in God our Saviour, without which it is impossible to "rejoice in the Lord" at all, much more to do it always. And therefore, as ever we desire to do what we have now heard, we must always keep our faith fixed upon Christ our Mediator and Advocate with the Father; and in his name pray for the Holy Spirit, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by his inspiration, that we may have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort, who is therefore called "the Comforter," because we can have no true comfort but by him. Yet by him we may have the greatest that any creature is capable of; comfort in God himself, the fountain of all true joy and comfort, so as to rejoice always in him; and that too, not only in a faint and weak manner, according to our narrow capacities, but by the sweet influences, and most powerful assistance of the Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from himself.

This, therefore, is that which I must advise you all to do; all such, I mean, as live in the true faith and fear of God, and make it your chief care and study to please, and serve, and honour him. I speak not to them who are still in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity, and so are altogether unacquainted with those celestial joys, which are not only above them, but contrary to their corrupt and sinful inclinations. But as for such among you, who strive all you can to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, take you special care to walk in this, as well as in any

other of them; this being not only one of those commandments, but one of those without which the others can never be kept aright: for ye must not only do the will of God, but delight to do it; which ye can never do without rejoicing in Him whose will it is, and who assists you all the while ye are doing it.

You profess to serve God, take heed that you do not dishonour him by living a melancholy and disconsolate sort of a life, as if you served a hard task-master, that gives you work to do without furnishing you with necessaries for it. For this would be a great reflection upon him and his service, and discourage others from entering into it. But, as you serve the greatest and best Master in the world, do it with all the cheerfulness and alacrity that you can; rejoicing continually in his holy name, and in his infinite mercy and kindness to you, in that he is pleased to admit you into the number of his own servants. This will make his service both easy and pleasant to you: and though it be far short of what ye owe him, yet he will be well pleased with it for Christ Jesus' sake, and in him also plentifully reward you for it. He will give you all you can desire to make you happy. "Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart," *Psa. xxxvii. 4.*

"Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in thee: they shall walk in the light of thy countenance. Their delight shall be daily in thy name: and in thy righteousness shall they make their boast," *Psa. lxxxix. 16, 17.* They live in heaven while they are upon earth; and whilst other people feed upon husks, like brutes, they enjoy the same kind of pleasures, though not in so great a measure, here

below, which the glorified saints and angels do above, who are always rejoicing in the Lord, and singing forth the praises of his holy name. And as we desire to do it with them hereafter, we must begin it here; and so spend the rest of our time, that we may be duly qualified fully to partake of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore; even that we may perfectly, continually, and eternally rejoice in our most mighty Creator, most merciful Redeemer, and most gracious Comforter one God, blessed for ever.

AGAINST RASH SWEARING.

MATTHEW V. 34.

BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, SWEAR NOT AT ALL.

THESE words are much to be observed, as containing the will of our heavenly Father, revealed to us, not by a prophet, or apostle, or any creature, but by his only-begotten Son, who came into the world on purpose to save us; and therefore, we may be sure, would require nothing of us but what is necessary for our salvation: and being himself also truly God, of the same nature with the Father, he could not but perfectly understand what was necessary, and what was the Divine will and pleasure we should do, in order thereunto. For which reason, therefore, while he was upon earth, conversing with mankind in their own likeness, he took particular care to instruct them with his own mouth in their whole duty, what they ought to believe, and what they ought to do, that they may be saved by him. And having observed, that the ancient rabbins, or doctors and leaders of the jewish church, had put false glosses and misinterpretations upon the moral law, and that the people, taking the sense of it from them, had been led into great mistakes about it, which might hinder their obtaining that eternal salvation which he designed to purchase for them with his own blood; he therefore took all occasions of correcting

those mistakes, and of acquainting them with the true sense and meaning of each commandment.

Particularly, whereas it is said in the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," *Exod. xx. 7*; and elsewhere, "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God," *Levit. xix. 12*; and again, "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth," *Numb. xxx. 2*. These, and such like laws concerning oaths and swearing, the ancient rabbins had interpreted so, as if no more was meant by them, but only that men should do whatever they had sworn they would do. Again, saith our Saviour, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," *Matt. v. 33*. Which false interpretation of those Divine laws was of very ill consequence; for people having received this from their forefathers, as the full sense of them, they made no conscience of swearing in their common discourse, or of taking the name of God rashly and in vain; they regarded not what, or how, or how often they swore; if they did but perform what they had sworn, they thought themselves guilty of no fault, but that they had perfectly obeyed the law, and done all that was required in it.

But our blessed Lord, who was himself the Law-giver, teacheth them another lesson, saying, in the words of my text, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all." As if he had said,—I, who made the law, and therefore must needs know the meaning of it

better than you or your forefathers : I, who am Wisdom itself, and therefore understand the full extent and latitude of every precept : I, who am Truth itself, and therefore neither will nor can deceive you : I, who am come into the world to direct you in the right way of serving God, and keeping his laws : I assure you there is a great deal more in those laws about swearing than you imagine, or have received by tradition from your ancestors ; for they do not only require you not to forswear yourselves, but not to swear at all ; “ But I say unto you, Swear not at all.”

But it is strange to observe, that these plain and perspicuous words, which were designed to explain those of the moral law, have been as little understood, and as falsely interpreted by some, as those which they were destined to explain : for, as the jews contracted the sense of the moral commandments into so narrow a compass, as if no more was intended by them but that men should not forswear themselves ; so some, who are called christians, as pelagians, and others, have extended these words of our Saviour so far, as to make them reach all manner of swearing, upon the most necessary and solemn occasions that can happen, which is every way as false and absurd as the other. And therefore, to prevent your falling into any mistakes about them, I shall first explain our Saviour's will and pleasure in them, what he doth not, and what he doth mean, by not swearing at all ; and then show how much it concerns all men carefully to observe what he here commands, saying, “ But I say unto you, Swear not at all.”

By swearing, therefore, we are to understand the calling God to witness the truth of what is said ;

for that is the usual definition of an oath, or the common notion of swearing in general. To make us sociable creatures, or capable of conversing with one another, God hath given us the use of speech, or language, whereby we can express or declare our thoughts and intentions to one another, which otherwise must always have lain hid in our own breasts, and unknown to all our fellow-creatures: whereas, by this means, we may know what another thinks, only by hearing him speak, at least so far as we are sure that his heart and his tongue go together. But that we can never be perfectly sure of, so long as men are in their imperfect state, and, as the psalmist speaks, are "all liars," *Psa. cxvi. 11*: for they may say one thing, and think or intend another; and none knows whether they think as they speak, or intend to do what they promise, but only God the Searcher of hearts. And therefore, the calling of him, or naming him as witness of the truth of what we say, is the greatest assurance that we can give to one another, that we really think or intend in our hearts what we utter with our lips; which if it be in a matter of fact, past or present, it is called an assertory oath, because we assert or affirm it to be so: if it be about something to come, which we say we will or will not do, it is called a promissory oath; unto which two all sorts of oaths may be reduced.

This being premised concerning the nature of oaths in general, we must, in the next place, observe, that these words of our Saviour cannot possibly be so understood as if it were a thing in itself unlawful; and therefore he would never have us take an oath, nor swear upon any occasion whatever, although lawful authority, or necessity require it; for we must not interpret one place of Scripture so as to

make it contradict another. But it is plain, both from the Old and New Testament, that to swear, or call God to witness what we say, was always reckoned not only lawful, but necessary, upon some occasions: which that I may fully convince you of, and so keep you from ever falling into the absurd and dangerous error of some in our days, who think it to be unlawful to swear, or take any oath, though administered by lawful authority, in a matter also that is lawful; I desire you to consider,

First; we find Almighty God himself, the supreme Lawgiver of the world, often swearing, sometimes by himself, sometimes by his holiness, which is himself. "The Lord hath sworn by his holiness," saith the prophet Amos, Amos iv. 2. "Once have I sworn by my holiness," saith he himself, "that I will not lie unto David, Psa. lxxxix. 35: and elsewhere, "I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation," Jer. xxii. 5. And upon Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee," Gen xxii. 16, 17. From whence the apostle observes, that "when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself," Heb. vi. 13. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath," Heb. vi. 17: If He sware who cannot sin, we may be confident it can be no sin to swear.

Moreover, as God himself is pleased sometimes to swear by himself, so he hath not only permitted,

but commanded us to swear by his name, saying, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name," Deut. vi. 13. And again; "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name," Deut. x. 20. From whence it appears, that he hath made this a part of that worship and honour which we ought to pay him; and that it is as much our duty, upon occasion, to swear by his name, as it is to fear and serve him. And in those very commandments, wherein he requires us not to take his name in vain, and not to swear by his name falsely, Exod. xx. 7; Levit. xix. 12, he plainly intimates that we may and ought to swear truly by it.

Accordingly, we find the holy angels themselves swearing by him. "And the angel," saith St. John, "which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever," Rev. x. 5, 6: see also Dan. xii. 7. And as for the saints in the Old Testament, there is nothing more frequently recorded of them, than their administering and taking of oaths; as Abraham made his steward "swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth," Gen. xxiv. 3: but such examples are so frequent, that I need not mention them.

But I cannot omit that, which, if it be possible, is more observable, even that God himself hath given us directions how to swear, saying, "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness," Jer. iv. 2: where we may observe his command to swear, in general, "Thou shalt swear;" the form of the oath he would have us take, "The Lord liveth;" and then the manner

how he would have it taken, "in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness."

In truth, that is, that the thing a man swears to, be true in itself, and known to be so to him that swear-eth; and that he swears it truly, sincerely, heartily, without any equivocation or mental reservation, and so be not in the number of those which the same prophet speaks of, saying, "Though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely," Jer. v. 2.

And as you must swear in truth, so also in judgment, that is, with that caution, prudence, discretion, and reverence, as becometh those who speak of Him, by whom they speak, in whom they live, and by whom their very thoughts as well as actions are weighed. And therefore, all those offend against this rule, who swear in passion, rashly, or inconsiderately; as Herod, when he swore that he would give Herodias' daughter whatever she asked, Matt. xiv. 7; and the princes of Israel, who swore to the Gibeonites without asking "at the mouth of the Lord," Josh. ix. 14, 15.

And then it must be done also in righteousness; that is, the matter of the oath must be lawful and just, agreeable to God's holy word, or, at least, no way contrary to it, as David's was, when he swore he would destroy all that pertained to Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 22. And what is thus sworn must be righteously and faithfully performed, otherwise it cannot be said to be sworn in righteousness; and therefore the prophet inveighs against those "which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness," Isa. xlviii. 1; because they did not take care to act accordingly. These are the rules which God himself hath prescribed to be diligently observed in every

oath that a man takes; and therefore he that takes an oath according to these rules, may be confident he doth not sin, for he acts according to God's own directions, who never teaches men how to sin, but how to do that which is lawful and right in his eyes. And therefore, he having directed us how to swear, he hath thereby given us an undeniable argument that we may lawfully do it, so that we do but observe his directions in it. And hence it is said, that everyone who thus "swaureth by the Lord shall glory," or be commended, "but the mouth of them that speak lies," or swear falsely, "shall be stopped," *Psa. lxxiii. 11.* And "he that swaureth to his own hurt and changeth not," is reckoned among those who shall "abide in the tabernacle of God, and dwell in his holy hill," *Psa. xv. 4.*

Neither hath God only given us these directions about swearing, but he gave power also to judges and magistrates to administer an oath in doubtful cases. If there be a controversy between two neighbours, concerning an ox or sheep, "the oath of the Lord shall be between them," and by that the judges shall determine the cause, *Exod. xxii. 10, 11.* And in the case of jealousy, "the priest shall charge the woman by an oath," *Numb. v. 19.* Thus Abimelech made Abraham swear to be true to him, *Gen. xxi. 23.* Abraham made his servant swear, that he would not take a wife to his son Isaac of the daughters of Canaan, *Gen. xxiv. 3—9.* Jacob made Joseph swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but amongst his forefathers, *Gen. xlvii. 30, 31.* Many such examples there are all over the Old Testament, which plainly show, that the saints of God in those days made no scruple at all of giving or taking oaths, but looked upon it as their duty in some cases to do it.

The same may be said also of those in the New Testament, especially St. Paul, who perfectly understood the mind of God and of our Saviour in my text; and yet often swears, or calls God to witness the truth of what he said, and that too when he was inspired with the infallible Spirit of God himself, in writing his mind and will. As where he saith, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers," Rom. i. 9; and elsewhere, "Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet to Corinth," 2 Cor. i. 23; and again, "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not," Gal. i. 20: which are all as plain and solemn oaths as any man can take; and therefore he that presumes to say, it is unlawful to take an oath, doth not only condemn St. Paul, but he blasphemes that Holy Spirit, by whom he spake, when he took those oaths; and how great a sin that is, let them look to it who are guilty of such horrid presumption.

To all which I shall only add, that the same St. Paul, who, doubtless, wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, though his name be not put to it; he, I say, expressly says, "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife," Heb. vi. 16: where he doth not only approve of taking oaths, or swearing upon lawful occasions, but acquaints us also with the great end and necessary use of it, even to put an end to all strife; this being, as it is expressed in the civil law, the greatest remedy that ever was or can be found out for the determining of controversies; for by swearing we call the greatest Being in the universe

to avouch the truth of what we say ; Him who certainly knows whether we swear truly or not, and who will as certainly punish us if we do not.

And hence it is, that swearing by his name is so great a part of that worship which we owe to God, because by that we testify our acknowledgment both of his omniscience, and his supreme authority over the world. And that is the reason why he commands us to swear by his name, and not by any other : as where Joshua, in his name, charges the people of Israel not to make mention of the name of the heathen gods, " nor cause to swear by them," Josh. xxiii. 7 ; and God was so angry with them afterwards for doing it, that he saith, " How shall I pardon thee for this ? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods," Jer. v. 7 ; where he plainly makes the swearing by any other but himself to be downright forsaking him : because, by that, men give that honour unto others which is due only to the true God, and so set them up for gods, by swearing by their names. From whence it appears, that it is so far from being unlawful, that it is a necessary duty to swear by the true God, and by him only.

And this, as I might easily show, hath been the constant sense and practice of the church of Christ in all ages ; but unless men be resolved to contradict the holy Scriptures themselves, rather than their own humours and fancies, the many plain undeniable proofs and instances that I have now produced out of the Old and New Testament, must needs be sufficient to convince them, that swearing by the name of God, is not in itself a sin, but a duty ; that we both may and ought to take an oath, when it is administered to us by lawful authority, as in

courts of judicature, for the deciding of controversies betwixt man and man, and upon such like weighty occasions; and, by consequence, that these words of our blessed Saviour, "Swear not at all," cannot possibly be so understood, as if he would never have us take an oath upon any occasion whatever; for this would be a plain contradiction to the law and the prophets, which he himself, in this very chapter, saith, he came "not to destroy but to fulfil," Matt. v. 17; and so this would make him contradict himself, which let them have a care of, who put such a mischievous and absurd sense upon his sacred words.

But you will say, perhaps, What then can he mean? Doth not he say, in plain terms, "Swear not at all?" He doth so; and if we take his words singly by themselves, without considering what goes before or follows after them, there might be some colour for such an exposition, if the rest of the Scriptures would allow of it. But this is not the way of finding out the true sense of holy Scripture, or any other writing: for where several words are put together to signify an author's mind, you must not take it from some of them without the rest, but from all together as he expressed it; otherwise you do not take his sense from the words, but put your own upon them: the not observing whereof hath been the occasion of most of the heresies and errors that have disturbed the church. Indeed, there is nothing so absurd or ridiculous but may be extorted from some place of Scripture or other, if you take the words apart by themselves, without considering the scope and design of the place; but if you do that, as all must do, that would interpret the Scriptures aright, the sense will then be plain and easy.

As in this very place, these words, "Swear not at all," are not a proposition of themselves, but part of our Saviour's divine discourse concerning oaths, or swearing, as it was then used by the jews. And if we cast our eye upon the whole discourse, and look upon it all together, we shall clearly see that our Saviour is not here speaking of taking oaths before a magistrate, or upon any public and solemn occasion, but of swearing in our common discourse and conversation with one another; and that is plainly the swearing which he forbids, as appears,

First, from the occasion of these words in the verse before my text, "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," Matt. v. 33; where he plainly speaks of promissory oaths which a man is bound afterwards to perform: but such oaths are never taken in courts of justice, for the deciding of controversies, but only between man and man.

The same appears also from what follows, "Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black," Matt. v. 34—36. For the understanding of which we must know that the jews were permitted to swear by the name of God only before their magistrates; but by their false interpreters of Scripture, they were allowed, in their common discourse, to swear by anything else, as by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, by their head, or the like. But our Saviour here makes no mention of their swearing by the name of God, but only by other things; which plainly show-

eth that he doth not refer here to their taking oaths before their magistrates in the name of God himself, but only to their swearing by other things : which seeing they never did, but only in their common discourse, his words must be understood only of such swearing as they commonly used betwixt one another : which they did not look upon as unlawful, or binding, because the name of God was not used in it. This might easily be shown, not only out of the Talmud and other jewish writers, but from Philo himself, who lived about our Saviour's time, and delivers the sense and practice of the jews in this matter.

This, therefore, is that which our Saviour here forbids, and gives us the reason why he doth so ; even because he that swears by heaven, or by earth, or any such thing, he doth, in effect, swear by God himself. "Swear not at all," saith he, "neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king ; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black." As if he had said, Heaven is God's throne, earth his footstool, Jerusalem his city, thy head his workmanship, for none but he can make so much as one hair white or black ; and therefore, he who sweareth by these things, swears, in effect, by God himself ; for, as he himself saith, in another place, "Whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon," Matt. xxiii. 21, 22. And therefore, the swearing by such things ought to be as much avoided as swearing by the name of God himself, in whom it terminates.

And this is that which St. James also means, where he saith, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath," James v. 12; that is, use no kind of oaths whatever in your common discourse; for they are all sinful, when so commonly and rashly used, one as well as another.

But to put it beyond all doubt, that our Lord speaks here only of common swearing, he himself is pleased to tell us so with his own mouth, saying, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay," Matt. v. 37; that is, Let your ordinary discourse, or speech, as the word signifies, whereby you converse and commune together, let it be pure and simple; let it not be corrupted with oaths or curses, but only affirming what you think to be true, or denying what you think to be false, without intermingling any sort of oaths with your words, or confirming what you say by swearing it is, or it is not so. For "whatsoever is more than these," saith he, "cometh of evil:" it proceeds from an evil mind, it produceth an evil custom, it is of an evil example, and tends to an evil end; and so it comes from the evil one, the devil himself, who, as he is the father of lies, so he is the father too of all profane swearing and cursing, which usually go together; cursing being indeed but one sort of swearing, and one of the worst sorts too, if one may be said to be worse than another, when all are as bad as bad can be.

By this time, I hope, you all perceive your Saviour's mind and meaning in these words, wherein he commands you not to swear at all in your ordinary conversation and discoursing with one another: and this is that command which I must now advise and beseech you all carefully to observe. I hope the

far greatest part of the congregation do already abominate this horrid sin of common and profane swearing, and so need not any arguments to dissuade them from it. But I fear that some of you are too much guilty of it: and there are none of you but may be sometimes liable to fall into it, by the prevalence of the devil's temptations, or of your own passions, or perhaps by your too easy and sinful compliance with the company you keep: there being many with whom you may sometimes have occasion to converse, so horribly addicted to this vice, that they cannot speak without an oath; and are so far from observing this command, "Swear not at all," that they always swear whenever they discourse upon any subject, though ever so trivial and unimportant; and all vice being infectious to our corrupt nature, they who keep company with such profane wretches are apt, in a short time, to become such themselves. There are many, too many instances, to be found of this kind; and therefore it will be necessary to arm you, as much as possible, against this damnable sin, which is grown so common in the whole land, that, unless it be prevented by a timely repentance, we have just cause to fear some extraordinary judgment will be inflicted upon us for it.

For which purpose, therefore, I desire you first to consider that you are all christians by profession, and hope to be saved by Christ; and therefore, one would think, that you need not any other arguments to persuade you not to swear, than that Christ himself hath said, "Swear not at all." Christ, who loved you, and gave himself for you; Christ, whom you profess to love and honour above all the persons in the world; Christ, who said, "If ye love me, keep

my commandments," he hath commanded you not to swear: and if you will not keep this commandment, which of all his commandments can you keep? None, certainly.

This is so plain, so cheap, so easy a commandment, that there is scarcely another like it in all the Bible; for it is only not to swear, not to do that which only will undo you, without affording you either pleasure or profit, or honour, or anything that you can so much as pretend to be a temptation to it: insomuch, that I have sometimes wondered with myself, what should be the reason that this sin is so common in the world; and, after all my search, can find out but this one, which is, that men will commit this sin because it is a sin. If God had never forbid you to swear, or had commanded you to do it, you would have been as backward to it as you are to praying or praising his name; but seeing he hath charged you not to swear, although there is nothing else can tempt you to it, yet you will do it; you will therefore do it, because God would not have you. Oh dreadful impiety! who can think of it without horror and amazement? that ever mankind should be so corrupted; that men should fly in the very face of heaven, and offend God only that they may offend him! And yet this is the case of every common swearer: and therefore if any of you be such, do not look upon yourselves any longer as christians, until you leave it off; nor of the communion of saints; but of the society of those wicked spirits who sin for sin's sake. Be sure ye are far from being christians, for christians are such as believe in Christ. But how can you so much as profess to believe in Christ, when you will not do any one thing that he bids you? And if you will not

do this, if you will not so much as leave swearing, in obedience to him, you may be confident that you obey him in nothing, but live in the constant transgression of all his laws. And with what confidence then can you expect to be saved by him? No; mistake not yourselves, he is the "Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," and to none else, Heb. v. 9. And, therefore, as ever you desire that Christ should stand your friend, and save you; as ever you desire that God would have mercy upon you for his sake, for his sake "swear not at all:" or, if you will not leave off this sin for Christ's sake, at least do it for your own sakes. If you do not care whether he save you or not, however be not so foolish as to condemn yourselves, as you plainly do by every oath you swear in common discourse: you condemn yourselves for a company of perfidious and lying wretches, that no man can believe one word you say, except you swear to it; except you bring a voucher, and the greatest too in the world, to attest the truth of what you say. Doth not this plainly argue that you are conscious to yourselves of great hypocrisy and deceit? Doth it not clearly show that you have forfeited all your credit and reputation in the world, so that you cannot be trusted or be believed without an oath? For, otherwise, what need you swear? Would not men believe you without an oath, if they took you for honest and good men? Yes, surely, far better than with it; for, after all, your swearing to it is so far from gaining any credit to what you say, that it utterly destroys it; for it is a most certain truth, that he who will swear, will lie: he who makes no conscience of offending God, will make none of deceiving men. And therefore, if we hear a man swear, we have no

ground to believe one word he saith, upon that very account, because he swears to it; but rather, we have reason to suspect everything he saith to be false, in that by his swearing he discovers himself to be a man of no conscience; and, therefore, one that matters not how much he imposeth upon us. So that, whatever some may think, this is certainly one of the most foolish, ridiculous, and absurd vices that a man can be guilty of; and which many of the heathens themselves frequently inveighed against, and looked upon it as a most horrid sin to swear even by their false gods.

But what a sin then must it be to swear vainly and rashly by the true God, the great, the Almighty God, who made and governs the whole world! Far greater, doubtless, than can be described. The mere speaking of him, or taking his sacred name into our mouth in vain, and to no purpose, is a great sin, expressly forbidden in the third commandment; how much more the common swearing by it, and calling upon him to attest the truth of what we say upon every slight occasion! It is true, all sins are committed against the laws of God, and so against his authority and power; but this is committed against his name, his person itself: it is downright affronting his Divine Majesty to his face. Would a prince take it well, if his subjects should call him, upon all occasions, to witness what they talk among themselves? Would he bear with such insolency, or suffer such contempt to be thrown continually upon him? Yet a prince and his subjects are fellow-creatures: but for creatures to do this to their Almighty Creator, for dust and ashes to call the Sovereign of the world to vouch their frivolous talk and chat, is such a piece of impudence and pre-

sumption, that did we not see it too frequently done, one would think it impossible that any mortal should dare to do it; that they should dare to take his sacred name in their polluted lips, which he hath so expressly commanded all men to fear and dread: "that thou mayest fear," saith he, "this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD," Deut. xxviii. 58. How far are all they from this holy fear who presume, upon all occasions, to profane this glorious name! How plainly do they show that they have no fear of God before their eyes! So plainly, that it is no breach of christian charity to say they have not; for if they had, they would be so far from taking his holy name in vain, that they would never dare to speak of him without fear and reverence; for their speaking of him would always call his greatness and glory to their minds. And who is able to think of so great and glorious a Being, without reverence and godly fear? And who then can fear him, and not fear the taking his name in vain? Hence Solomon makes this the great difference betwixt a wicked and a good man, that the one "swareth," and the other "feareth an oath," Eccles. ix. 2. A good man, who fears God, fears the profaning of his holy name by oaths; but he who swears is a wicked man; therefore wicked because he swears: wicked in the highest degree of wickedness. How should this make all men dread the thoughts of this horrid sin, which so plainly demonstrates them to be in the "gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity!"

Especially, considering that this is not only a great sin of itself, but it is usually accompanied with others as great, and, if it be possible, greater than itself: for they that commonly swear, commonly curse too, and that both themselves and

others. What dreadful curses do such foul-mouthed wretches usually denounce against their neighbours : Such as are not to be so much as named among christians : and yet they will bestow them as liberally upon themselves too, as well as others ; cursing and damning themselves (I dread to speak it) to the very pit of hell, as if they wished to be there before their time. I dare not so much as suppose there are any such among you ; but if there be, I must tell them, they need not take so much pains to curse and damn themselves, for God himself, ere long, will do it for them. Nay, he hath begun to do it already, in that he hath given them over to the power of the devil, who will be sure to hold them fast, till he hath gotten them into his own kingdom of darkness, where they will meet with all the bitter imprecations that ever came out of their mouths, and feel them for ever. This they will find to be one dismal effect of their taking God's name in vain.

And besides, they that swear often, often forswear themselves ; much oftener, perhaps, than they themselves think of : for the custom of this sin makes it so natural and familiar to them, that they do not know when they commit it ; but if you tell them of it, will swear they did not swear. And not always knowing what or when they swear, they must needs frequently swear to that which is false, and as frequently omit the doing what they swear they will, and so forswear themselves, and be guilty of perjury in the sight of God.

And it is well if there be not blasphemy in it too. Their calling God, as they commonly do, to witness that which is false, is a plain contradiction either to his omniscience or truth : for it is as much as to say, that he doth not know it to be false, or if

he doth, will nevertheless attest the truth of it: which cannot be judged less than downright blasphemy.

And what dreadful punishments, then, must common swearers be exposed to! such as it would make one's ears to tingle, and one's heart to tremble, to hear or think of them. God himself hath told them with his own mouth, and hath given it under his hand too in the third commandment, written with his own finger, that "he will not hold them guiltless;" that is, he will be sure to punish them one time or other severely for it. He may suffer them to go on for a while in profaning his sacred name, until they have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and then he will shower down his judgments in full proportion to their sins, until they are utterly destroyed. They have His own word for it, who cannot lie, and therefore they may believe it: and whether they now believe it or not, they shall one day feel it, whether they will or not; for God will not be mocked, much less will he suffer his sacred name to be profaned by his own creatures, without making them know what it is to provoke and dishonour him that made them.

Hearken to what God himself saith, by his angel, to the prophet Zechariah. The prophet, in a vision, had seen a flying roll, and the angel said to him, "What seest thou?" He answered, "I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits." Then said the angel to him, "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on this side according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord

of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name : and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof," Zech. v. 2—4. Behold here a roll, or book rolled up, a great roll, twenty cubits long and ten broad, all full of curses on both sides ; behold this roll flying swiftly about over the face of the whole earth ; and behold it lighting at last upon every one that stealeth, and upon every one that sweareth, none escaping who either rob their neighbours of their goods, or God of his honour, by taking his name in vain. Behold it lighting upon his house, and there remaining till it hath consumed both him and it, to the very timber and stones ; whereby is signified God's determinate counsel and purpose, not to suffer false or common swearers to go unpunished : the roll will meet with them, the curse will light upon them one time or other, and destroy them root and branch.

Neither doth this sin destroy only particular persons and families, but whole nations. "Because of swearing the land mourneth," saith the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xxiii. 10 ; and this is one of those sins for which God had a controversy with his own people, the inhabitants of the land of Judea, and for which he saith, "The land shall mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish," Hos. iv. 1—3. God grant that this be not fulfilled upon our land, wherein this sin hath been, and, I fear, still is, as common as ever it was in Judea. It is true, the nation in general hath forbidden it, and enacted a law against it, and therefore I hope that God of his infinite mercy will not impute it to the whole nation, nor reckon it a national sin : but if the people of the

nation do, notwithstanding the laws both of God and man, continue in it, some severe judgment will certainly fall upon them for it; at least upon those who are guilty of it.

But I hope none of you are so: and if any of you be, give me leave to deal plainly with you. You have now heard that Christ himself hath commanded you not to swear at all: and it is not long but you must stand before his tribunal, where you must give an account how you have observed this, as well as any other of his commands. Now, what will you plead for yourselves, what can you say in excuse for this sin? Will you say that you did not know it was a sin? That you cannot; for I dare say you knew it before, and have now heard it again to be so. Will you say that you were tempted to it? That you cannot; for there can be no temptation to this, of all sins, but from your own wicked and corrupt hearts. Will you say that you were so accustomed to it, that you could not leave it? That you cannot; for you may as easily lay down as take up an ill custom, if you will. And besides, this will be so far from excusing, that it will highly aggravate your crime, as showing that you had committed it so often, that it was grown into custom and habit with you. What then will you do? Nothing, certainly, but expect your sad and irrevocable doom from the Judge of the whole world, who hath told you beforehand what you must expect. "But I say unto you," saith he, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt. xii. 36, 37. And if we must give an account of every idle word, what a dreadful account must you give for all your swearing and

cursing! If men shall be justified by their words, how can you be justified by yours, so expressly contrary to the laws of God? If men shall be condemned for their words, you, certainly, of all men, can expect nothing but to be condemned for yours to everlasting shame and confusion. This St. James puts you in mind of, where he requires you, above all things, not to swear at all, "lest ye fall into condemnation," James v. 12; for so ye will all do, except ye repent and leave off this sin before it be too late. Ye may please yourselves, if you think good, at present with it; but know this, that God, ere long, will bring you into judgment for it, and there pronounce that righteous sentence upon you, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41.

Consider these things, all you who have hitherto been any way addicted to this heinous vice, and tell me whether it doth not behove and concern you to break it off immediately by a hearty and sincere repentance? I say immediately, lest otherwise you may happen to die first, and so perish for ever. Wherefore, let me advise and beseech you all, as you either fear God, or love your own souls, to do it now; now that you have heard how odious and abominable it is before God and man; now do you begin to abominate and hate it so, as stedfastly to resolve, by God's assistance, never to commit it any more. And, for that purpose, keep these words of your blessed Saviour, "I say unto you, Swear not at all," always fresh in your minds and memories; and lest you should forget them, desire your friends, relations, and acquaintance to put you in mind of them, every time they hear you so much as take the name of God in vain. And when you hear others do

it, be not afraid nor ashamed to rebuke them for it: it is the greatest kindness you can show them, and they will thank you for it another time, and God will be well pleased with it. And if any be so proud and obstinate as to scorn reproof, and notwithstanding all that God or man can say, will still retain and practise this execrable vice, let them be unto you as heathens and publicans; keep company no longer with them, but shun and avoid them as you would do persons infected with the plague, lest you catch it of them.

But that you may be sure never to fall into this sin hereafter, keep, as far as possibly you can, from it; come not near the borders of it, but run from everything that looks like swearing: remember the apostle's words, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thess. v. 22.

There are many words and phrases commonly used among us, of which some have made a question whether they be oaths or not: but whether they be or not, it is your safest way to avoid them. It may be a sin to use them, but can be none not to use them. And there are words and phrases enough, whereby you may express your minds upon all occasions, besides those that look like oaths, whether they be or not. And it is as easy to accustom yourselves to those which are unquestionably lawful, as to such whose lawfulness is by many questioned. This also is most agreeable to our Saviour's will, who doth not only command you not to swear, but requires that "your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay," Matt. v. 37: that is, that you only affirm or deny what is said, without backing it with anything like an oath; that so everything you speak may be, at least, harmless and innocent, and, if possible, useful too; according to that excellent

rule laid down by the apostle, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers," Eph. iv. 29.

But, after all, that you may never have the least occasion to swear, or to confirm what you say by oaths, ye must be sure to be always firm and constant to your promise, just and righteous in your dealings, true and faithful in all your words, so as never to tell a lie to gain the world; and then your word will be sooner taken than another's oath; and you will both act and walk together as becometh christians, as becometh the dutiful and obedient servants of the blessed Jesus, careful to observe and do whatever he hath bidden you, so that ye may receive that blessed sentence from him, "Well done, good and faithful servants; enter ye into your Master's joy!"

THE APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION IN THE
NAME OF THE TRINITY.

2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 14.

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF
GOD, AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST, BE WITH
YOU ALL.

IT would be great rashness in us, who know so little of our own nature, to inquire into the nature of Him who made us, any further than he himself hath been pleased to make it known unto us in his holy word. But it would be the height of impudence and presumption, to attempt explaining the incomprehensible mystery of the most glorious Trinity; how three distinct Persons subsist in the same individual nature, so as to be all one and the same God. It is sufficient for us to believe what is written, that there is but one living and true God; that "the Lord our God is one Jehovah," one Being, the Lord, Deut. vi. 4. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, these three are one Being, one Jehovah, one God; that the Father is of himself, the Son of the Father, the Holy Ghost of the Father and the Son, and "yet none before or after the other, none greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons co-eternal together, and co-equal." This we are bound to believe, because it is revealed by God himself, and therefore revealed by him, that we may believe it upon his word, although it be above the reach of our finite understandings, as he himself knows it is;

and therefore doth not require us to understand, but to believe it; and hath made known as much of it as he thought good for that purpose only, that we might know what he would have us to believe concerning it.

Now, one very remarkable thing revealed in the holy Scriptures concerning the most glorious Trinity, is this, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, although they be all one and the same God, yet they often exert and manifest themselves and their Divine perfections severally, as well as jointly, and so have their several ways of working in the world; as appears from many places, and particularly from the words I have now read: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." For here we have three Divine Persons distinctly named: the Son, called the Lord Jesus Christ; the Father, here called in an especial manner God, as being the root and fountain of the Deity, as the primitive writers style him; and then here is the third Person, expressly called the Holy Ghost. And to each of these Persons here is a several property or perfection attributed, the apostle wishing to the Corinthians the grace of one, the love of another, and the communion of the third: which does not only show that they are three distinct Persons or subsistencies, but also that they have distinct operations, or their several ways of working and manifesting themselves in the world. And this, if rightly understood, would give us great light into what we ought to believe concerning each Person; and how we ought to exercise our faith upon all and every one of them, according to the discoveries which they are pleased to make of themselves with respect to us.

And therefore, I shall endeavour to explain it as clearly as I can, being a matter of so high a nature : humbly beseeching Him of whom I speak so to assist and direct me, that I may say nothing but what is agreeable to his holy word, and becoming his Divine Majesty.

For this purpose, therefore, we must first consider, in general, that this almighty, most glorious, and eternal Being, which we call God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, hath been graciously pleased to show forth and manifest himself and his Divine perfections in many wonderful ways, particularly in the creation and redemption of the world. In the first, he manifested his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness ; in the other, his infinite love, and justice, and mercy, and truth, to mankind ; in both, the infinite glory of his eternal Godhead. And it is much to be observed, that in both these great works which he hath done, whereby to set forth his glory, we find three distinct Persons specified, or particularly named by himself, as concurring in the doing of them, and each in a way peculiar to himself. The account that God himself hath given us of his creation, or production of all things out of nothing, begins thus : "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Where the word, in the original, which we translate God, is of the plural number ; but it is joined with a verb of the singular, as it is almost everywhere in the Old Testament. Now, although I will not say that an argument can be drawn from hence to convince a gainsayer that there are just three Persons in the Godhead, because a word of the plural number may possibly signify more ; yet, seeing that in hebrew, where there is likewise a dual, three is the first

plural number ; and seeing the first must, in reason, be preferred before all other, and seeing God himself hath in many places of his word acquainted us that there are three Persons, and no more, in his Godhead, we may reasonably from hence infer, that God calleth himself by this name of the plural, and joins it with verbs and adjectives of the singular number, on purpose to put us in mind of the Trinity in unity, that he is three in one, and that every one of these Divine Persons is to be adored and worshipped alike ; that being, as I take it, the true notion of the word. For though the root from whence Eloah comes, be not preserved in the hebrew tongue, it is in the arabic dialect, where الله Alaha, signifies to worship or adore : and, accordingly, Eloah signifies one that is to be worshipped ; and in the plural number Elohim, "Persons adorable," such as are and ought to be worshipped by all things that are ; as He, certainly, ought to be by whom all things were made, and were made by him for that end, that he might be worshipped by them. And it is very observable, that in the next chapter, when the creation was finished, he is called by two names, the one of the singular number, the other of the plural ; the one signifying his essence, the other, the Persons subsisting in it. But in all the first chapter of Genesis, while he was doing this great work, he is not so much as once called by any other name than Adorandi, or Adorabiles, "Persons to be adored ;" but by that he is called above thirty times in that one chapter : whereby, I humbly conceive, he hath signified his pleasure to us, that when we consider his creation of the world, we should ascribe it to all the three Persons, and adore

them for it. And, indeed, that they were all concerned in it, appears from the history of the creation itself; wherein, although the Creator, as I have shown, be all along called Elohim, "Divine Persons," in the plural number; yet, that name being as constantly there joined with a verb of the singular number, the unity of the Divine Nature, or Godhead, is likewise signified by it. In which sense it is said in the second verse, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters:" that is, the Spirit of that one God, who is Elohim, "Divine Persons;" of which the Spirit here spoken of must needs be one; forasmuch as he operates in the creation, which none but God the Creator could do. So that we have here two distinct Persons, the Spirit of God, and God himself, whose Spirit he is, even the Father; who, as I observed before, is in an especial manner often called God.

After this we read, that God made all things by his word: "He said, Let there be light: and there was light," Gen. i. 3. And so he made his works all the six days, until he came to make man; he made them all by his word: not by any outward word spoken, but by speaking in himself, by willing them to be, and so by his inward, his essential Word; that is, by his eternal and only begotten Son, as we are fully assured by his evangelist St. John, who, by his direction, begins the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ with this character of him, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," John i. 1—3. And to the same purpose St. Paul, speaking of the Son of God, saith,

“By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him,” Col. i. 16; Eph. iii. 9. And elsewhere, “By whom he made the worlds,” Heb. i. 2. From all which it appears, that the Word by which God made the world, was his only Son, then with him: if his Son, then a Person, and, if with him, then a distinct Person from him. So that now we plainly see three distinct Persons manifesting themselves in the creation of the world; God the Father, his Son, and his Spirit. As the royal prophet also long ago observed, saying, “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath” (or Spirit) “of his mouth,” Psa. xxxiii. 6.

To this we may add that remarkable passage which occurs in the formation of man, as both explaining and confirming all that hath been hitherto said: for upon the sixth, or last day of the creation, when God was pleased to make man, it is written, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” Gen. i. 26. In the original it is **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים**. And God in the plural number, said in the singular, “Let us make man, and let us make him in our image, after our likeness;” still in the plural number: which shows us, as plainly as words can do it, that several Persons concurred in this great work; and that they had all one and the same image and likeness, and, therefore, were of one and the same nature or essence. Neither can the words possibly bear any other sense. All that the jews and socinians have said upon them, according to their blasphemous doctrine, makes them downright nonsense; whereas,

according to our christian doctrine, nothing is more plain and easy. For when the most blessed Trinity was pleased to make man, the chief and lord of all earthly creatures, he did not say, as in the making of other creatures, Let there be a man ; but, Let us, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make man ; and let us make him as like unto ourselves, who are all of the same likeness, as a creature can be made. All which might be, as in effect it was, most truly and properly said, according to our common way of speaking : whereas, if there were not several Divine Persons then in being, or but only one, to whom could God say, " Let us make man ? " Who but a Divine Person could do such a work ? Or how could he say, Let us make him in our own image, after our likeness, if there was only one Person in the world in whose image and likeness he could be made ? No ; all the wit of man, and of the devil himself, can never invalidate the invincible force of this place, to prove that there were several Divine Persons of the same Divine essence who severally exerted and discovered themselves in the creation of the world in general, and particularly in the making of mankind.

And as it was in the creation, so it was likewise in the redemption of mankind. The world was made by the Word of God, and it was redeemed by the same Word, the Son of God, the second of the Divine Persons, whom St. John calls " the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," 1 John v. 7. All which, as I have shown, co-operated in the making of man at first ; and so they did too in the saving and redeeming him, when he was fallen from the state in which he was at first made. For whereas there were two most critical times appointed for the

effecting our redemption : one for the incarnation of our Redeemer, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, in order to it ; and the other for his baptism, when he was initiated, as it were, into it, and actually took this great work upon him : at both these times, we find all the Persons of the most glorious Trinity particularly mentioned as concerned in it.

As for the first, when the fulness of time was come that the Son of God should be incarnate, God sent the angel Gabriel to acquaint the blessed virgin that he should be conceived and born of her ; and, among other things, said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," Luke i. 35. Upon the saying of which words, and the blessed virgin's expressing her consent, by saying, "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word ;" this great work was done, the Son of God was conceived in her, the Word was made flesh. Now, here we see three Divine Persons concurring in this wonderful work : the Son of God ; the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God ; and the Highest, or the Father, whose Son the one, and whose Spirit or power the other is. One was conceived ; he was conceived by another ; and that other was the power of a third Person. So that in this, the first thing that was actually done in order to our redemption, and upon which the whole work depended, the whole three Persons in the most blessed Trinity were most graciously pleased to show themselves : the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, blessed for ever.

And so they did likewise most wonderfully at the baptism of our Redeemer, when he was solemnly inaugurated into the office he had undertaken for us, and, accordingly, began to set about it. For it is written, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 16, 17. Here all the three Persons of the most holy Trinity did evidently appear together. For here was a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son," which could be no other but the voice of the Father, who also declared himself to be so, by calling the other his Son; and then, here was the Son of this Father declared to be so by the Father himself; and here was, also, the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon the Son; and so anointing him to be both a Priest, a Prophet, and a King; who is, therefore, most properly called the Messiah, or Christ the Anointed of God, and every way qualified to be our Mediator or Redeemer. Yea, it is wonderful to observe, the three infinitely glorious, incomprehensible Persons were pleased, upon this extraordinary occasion, to manifest themselves severally to the very senses of men, to their eyes and ears: for the Father was heard speaking, the Son was seen in the nature of man coming out of the water, and the Holy Spirit was seen in the shape of a dove descending and lighting upon him. And, therefore we may truly say with St. Augustin, that at this time, "The Trinity appeared most manifestly: the Father in a voice; the Son in a man; the Holy Spirit in a

dove.”* And with St. Jerome, “The mystery of the Trinity is demonstrated in the baptism of Christ: the Lord is baptized; the Spirit descendeth in the likeness of a dove; the voice of the Father, giving testimony to the Son, is heard.”†

And it is much to be observed, that as all the three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thus manifested themselves at the baptism of our Saviour, so he himself requires, that all who would be his disciples, should be made so by being baptized in the name of all the same Persons; saying to his apostles, “Go ye therefore, and teach,” or make, “all nations” my disciples, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” Matt. xxviii. 19. So that the same Divine Persons who so manifestly appeared at the baptism of Christ, are all to be particularly named at the baptism of every christian, by Christ’s own institution. And no man can be initiated into the church of Christ, and so made a christian, any other way but by being so baptized: this being the only way appointed by Christ himself for that purpose; who thereby hath sufficiently declared, that he will own none for his disciples, but such as are baptized in the name of all the same Persons, who appeared in so miraculous a manner when he himself was baptized; and also that our salvation depends upon, and must be attributed unto all of them. For seeing he himself hath so ordered it, that none can be brought into a state of salvation but by being first baptized in the name of all three, all three must needs be acknowledged to concur in the effecting of it.

* Aug. in Evang. Joh. tract. 6.

† Hieron. in Matt. 3.

And, verily, that they do so, appears most evidently, also, from the words of my text. For as all these Divine Persons manifested themselves in the creation of the world in general, and at the making of man in particular, as they appeared at the incarnation and baptism of our Redeemer, and as our Redeemer himself requires that all who would partake of that redemption which he hath purchased, should be baptized in the name of all three; so the apostle here, by his direction, writing to such as were so baptized at Corinth, and concluding his epistle to them with an hearty prayer that they might have all things necessary to their salvation, refers all such things to three heads, and attributes them severally to the three Persons in the most holy Trinity; and accordingly prays to each of them, saying, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all:" so that did we but understand these words aright, we should thereby know how to exercise our faith in all and each of these Divine Persons, for what is necessary to our obtaining eternal salvation, according to their several ways of concurring to it.

But for that purpose, before we enter upon the explication of the several parts of the text, it will be necessary to observe some things in general about it. As, first, although here be three several Persons named, and different properties are severally attributed to them, yet they are not several, but all "one and the same individual God." This we are fully assured of by all those reasons, and by all such places of the holy Scriptures, which demonstrate the unity of the Godhead: as where it is said, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God" (our Elohim in the plural number) "is one Lord," one Jehovah, Deut. vi. 4.

This the Son asserts of the Father and himself, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30; not *εἷς*, but *ἐν ἑσμέν*, one Jehovah, one Being: and St. John of all three, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one," 1 John v. 7: where the same word is used again, *ἐν εἷσι*, *unum sunt*, they are in the plural number, but they are one in the singular; one Being, *יהוה אחד*, one Jehovah, one God.

Hence, in the next place, whatever perfections, or properties, (except such as are purely personal,) are attributed to any of these Divine Persons, are the same in all, and may equally be attributed to every one, they being all and every one the same God, in whom all perfections centre, or rather, who is all perfection itself. And, therefore, when we read of the grace of one, the love of another, and the fellowship of the third Divine Person, it is not to be so understood, as if these properties were so peculiar to those Persons to which they are here attributed, that they do not belong also to the other; for they are the same in all, and may be equally attributed to one as well as another; and so they are in the holy Scriptures. Here grace is ascribed to the Son, and love unto the Father; in other places love is ascribed to the Son, and grace unto the Father: as where St. Paul saith, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Rom. viii. 35. "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 19; and St. John, "Hereby perceive we the love of God," [the Son,] "because he laid down his life for us," 1 John iii. 16. Here love is plainly attributed to the Son; and so is grace to the Father, where St. Paul saith, "By the grace of

God I am what I am," 1 Cor. xv. 10. And, "not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i. 12. And as we here read of the communion, or fellowship of the Holy Ghost, we elsewhere read of the fellowship of the Son; "God is faithful," saith the apostle, "by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," 1 Cor. i. 9. And St. John saith, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3: which I therefore observe, lest any should think that we detract anything from one Person by attributing it to another; for whatever Divine properties are attributed to any one, are hereby attributed unto all; they being all one and the same God, in whom all properties also are one and the same property; and therefore cannot be divided, nor belong to one more than to another, as they are in him.

But then we must observe withal, that notwithstanding this, when the Almighty Being, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is pleased to operate upon things without him, and so to exert, and manifest himself to us, there is something particular attributed to one of these Divine Persons more than to another. As it is plain, that it was not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son, who took the nature of man upon him. It was not the Father, nor the Son, but the Holy Spirit, who, at the creation of the world, "moved upon the face of the waters;" who, at the incarnation of Christ, overshadowed the blessed Virgin; and who, upon the day of Pentecost, came down upon the apostles. Thus all along in the holy Scriptures, the Father is said, in a peculiar manner, to be our Maker, the Son our Saviour, and the Holy

Spirit our Sanctifier. And accordingly in my text, where the three Persons are all mentioned together with respect to us, the apostle prays for something particular from each of them: for the love of the Father, as he is the Maker and Governor of the world; for the grace of the Son, as he is the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind; and for the communion of the Holy Ghost, as he is the Sanctifier and Comforter of all the elect people of God: which will serve us as a key to open the whole mystery contained in these words, as we shall see more presently.

But here is still another thing to be observed in general; which is, that the Son is here placed before the Father, whereas reason may seem to require that the Father should be placed first, as he is by the Son himself, commanding baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and by his beloved disciple, saying, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 John v. 7. According to which order, the apostle should have said, the love of God the Father, and the grace of Jesus Christ; whereas, he contrariwise puts the Son first, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God:" which being done by the special direction of the Holy Ghost, there was certainly great reason for it. Which that we may rightly understand, we must take notice, that in the places before quoted, the Divine Persons are named in their essential order, that which they have in and among themselves, or with respect to one another: according to which, the Father is placed first, because he begot the Son; the Son is placed second, because he was begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost last, because he proceeds from both.

But the apostle, in my text, speaks not of the order of the Divine Persons among themselves, but of that which they observe with respect to us and our salvation. He here wisheth to the Corinthians all things necessary to their salvation by Christ; and therefore, it was necessary that he should begin first with Christ their Saviour, without whom they could never have had either the love of God, or the communion of the Holy Ghost. It is true the love of God the Father was the first cause or motive of our salvation, as our Saviour himself hath taught us, saying, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. But then we must observe, that our Saviour speaks here of God's love to mankind in general, saying, "God so loved the world:" he doth not speak of his love to particular men; it was out of his infinite love to fallen man in general, that he sent his Son into the world; but his love to any particular man is only in, and for the sake of his said Son, and not otherwise. For by nature we are all enemies to God, and therefore he is so to us; and there is no way for us to be reconciled to him, or to have him reconciled to us, but by his Son. For, as the apostle saith, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," Rom. v. 10; and if it be by his Son only that we are reconciled to God, it must needs be only by his Son that we can have his love and favour: which he therefore never shows to any man, but only upon the account of "him in whom he is well pleased." But as the apostle saith, nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 39; whereby we are

given to understand, that the love which God the Father hath for any of us, is only in his Son, and for his sake, without whom we could expect nothing but wrath and vengeance from him: and, by consequence, that the grace of Christ is most properly here placed before the love of God, seeing we cannot have this, unless we have that first. The same may be said also of the communion of the Holy Ghost; for that, likewise, is "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Tit. iii. 5, 6, as the same apostle teacheth us. Wherefore, seeing that we can never have either the love of God the Father, or the communion of God the Holy Ghost, but only by the grace of God the Son; there was all the reason in the world that the apostle should pray for this first, and say first, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," then "the love of God," and lastly, "the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

These things being thus premised in general, we shall easily discover the meaning of the several parts of the text. The first thing which the apostle here wisheth to the Corinthians, is, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;" which is a phrase he delights in very much. The common salutation that he useth at the beginning of every one of his thirteen epistles, to those he wrote to, runs thus; "Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." And at the end of his epistles, he sometimes saith in short, "Grace be with you," Col. iv. 18; Tit. iii. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Heb. xiii. 25: but most usually he concludes with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," Rom. xvi. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 23; Gal. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 23; 1 Thess. v. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 18; Philem. ver. 25; and so St. John concludes the book

of Revelation, and the whole New Testament, Rev. xxii. 21. From whence we may infer, that grace is to be had only by Christ; that his grace is the greatest blessing that can be desired; and that where the grace of Christ is, there is also the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, which are therefore particularly mentioned in my text, that we may know from whence they come, and that they are to be understood, wherever the grace of Christ is mentioned.

But then the question is, What is meant by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ? and how it comes to be so often appropriated unto him? For which it will be necessary to consider that remarkable passage in the gospel of St. John, where he, having asserted the eternal and Divine nature of the Word or Son of God, saith, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John i. 14, 16, 17. Here we see, first, that the Word, or Son of God, was made flesh; that is, he took upon him the nature of man in general, so as to become Immanuel, God with us, God and man in one person; and as such, he is here said to be full of grace and truth. Where, by grace, I do not question but we are to understand, that which in the Old Testament is called חֶסֶד, mercy; these two חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, mercy and truth, being very frequently put together, mercy always before truth: as where it is said, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth," Psal. xxv. 10. "Mercy and truth are met together," Psal. lxxxv. 10. "By mercy and truth

iniquity is purged," Prov. xvi. 6. "Mercy and truth preserve the king," Prov. xx. 28. Thus they are frequently joined together, Gen. xxxii. 10; 2 Sam. ii. 6; xv. 20; Psal. xxxvi. 5; xl. 11; lvii. 3, 10; lxi. 7; lxxxix. 1, 2, 14; xcvi. 3; c. 5; cxv. 1; cxxxviii. 2; Prov. iii. 3; xiv. 22. Thus God proclaimeth himself to be "abundant in goodness and truth," Exod. xxxiv. 6; where the word which we translate goodness, is the same which in the places before quoted is rendered mercy; and so it is rightly translated in that parallel place, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth," Psal. lxxxvi. 15. And accordingly, God the Son, as incarnate, is here said to be "full of grace," or mercy, "and truth." "And of his fulness," saith St. John, "all we have received." We have none but what we receive from him; and how much soever we receive, he is still full: as the sun is still full of light, notwithstanding that we continually receive and enjoy it.

Neither do we only receive of his fulness in general, but we receive "grace for grace," that is, all manner of grace, according to that fulness which is in him. In him is that fulness and perfection of all grace and mercy; and for that it is in him our Head, we of him receive whatever grace or mercy we have occasion for. And the reason is, because, as it here follows, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The law, as given by Moses, threatened death and damnation, even all manner of judgment without mercy, to all that continued not in all things written in it; which no man having done, all are by the law condemned to die, and suffer all the punishments which are there

threatened, without any hopes of mercy, there being none there promised. But as the law was thus given by Moses, "grace," or mercy, "and truth came," *ἐγένετο*, was made, "by Jesus Christ," as the author and procurer of it. The law hath concluded all under sin, and therefore hath passed the sentence of condemnation upon all. And if the sentence be ever revoked or omitted, or if it be not actually executed, it must be acknowledged to be a great mercy. But there is no such mercy promised in the law given by Moses: there is not a word of that there, nor anywhere else, but only in the gospel of Christ; who having, in our nature, undergone the punishments to which we are condemned by the law, he hath thereby made way for mercy to be shown us, by God's accepting of his death instead of ours, and so acquitting or discharging us from it: yea, he hath thereby merited or purchased mercy for us, all manner of mercy, in that his death was of infinitely more value than all ours could ever have been. For that God is never merciful to any, but only for the sake of his Son, and upon the account of his death, is plain from his never showing any mercy, but only to those for whom Christ died. The fallen angels stand in as much need of mercy as fallen man, but they never had, nor ever will have any, because Christ did not die for them. But he having taken our nature upon him, and in it suffered the punishments which by the law were due to us, God is graciously pleased, for his sake, to promise grace or mercy to us; and whatever grace or mercy we receive from him, it comes to us only by Jesus Christ: as the Holy Spirit here assures us, saying, that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It was in him that grace was at first promised to us,

and it is in him that such promises are verified or fulfilled. "For," as the apostle saith, "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen," 2 Cor. i. 20; that is, in him they were all made, and in him they are all confirmed and performed to us. And therefore, truth is not here opposed, as it is commonly thought, only to the types and figures of the law, but it signifies, more especially, the truth and certainty of the promises which God hath made to mankind of grace and mercy in his Son. And that is the reason that mercy, as I observed before, is not only here, but all along in the holy Scriptures, put before truth; because mercy is first promised, and then truly granted according to that promise, and both by Christ. It was by him that grace was at first promised to us, and it is by him that the truth of such promises is assured to us, and so both "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," Psa. lxxxix. 33, 34, 49.

From hence we may gather what is here meant by "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," in my text. It is the grace, the free undeserved favour and mercy; it is the grace of the Lord, the Almighty God, the eternal and only-begotten Son, of the same substance and glory with the Father; it is the grace of the Lord Jesus, the most high God made man, and so become Jesus, a Saviour to save his people from their sins; it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, of God our Saviour, anointed to be to us a Prophet, a Priest, and King, and so fully qualified and able to do all things necessary for our salvation. And therefore, all such things are here signified by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; all things that are required, all things that can any way conduce to our eternal salvation; they are all contained in, and

they all proceed from his grace and mercy to us, without whom we can neither have, nor do anything at all towards it. But by him, there is nothing but we may have, nothing but we can do, that he would have us, in order to our being saved. By him we are called "out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. By him we have grace to repent, and turn every one from his own iniquities, so that sin shall not have dominion over us, seeing we are not under the law, but under grace, Acts v. 31; iii. 26; Rom. vi. 14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14. By him we are justified freely through his grace, and accounted righteous before God himself, Rom. iii. 24; Tit. iii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21. By him, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God," and are as perfectly reconciled unto him, as if he had never been angry or displeased with us, Rom. v. 1, 10. By him we have power to become the sons of God; and if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with him who is Heir of all things, John i. 12; Rom. viii. 17; Heb. i. 2. By him we are washed from our sins in his own blood, and are made kings and priests to God and his Father, Rev. i. 5, 6. By him we can overcome the world, and triumph over death itself, 1 John v. 4, 5. By him we can do, and by him we can suffer whatever God sees good to lay upon us: for his grace is always sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness; so that we can do all things through Christ which strengthens us, 2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 13. By him we have a place prepared for us in heaven, "that where he is, there we may be also, to behold his glory, and be glorified

together with him," John xiv. 2, 3; xvii. 24; Rom. viii. 17. In short, by him we may have everything that is in any way necessary, either to the beginning, the carrying on, or the perfecting our salvation; "for he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. All these things we have by Christ, and receive them of that infinite grace and mercy which are in him. And therefore, the apostle, wishing to the Corinthians "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," he thereby wished them everything relating to their eternal salvation, as coming wholly and solely from his grace and mercy.

The next thing that follows in my text, is "the love of God." And it may well follow upon "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" here, for it doth so everywhere. For he, the eternal Son of God, having, as I have shown, reconciled us to his Father, wherever his grace is, the love of the Father follows in course, who being always well-pleased with all who partake of him, hath a special love for them; the love of a father to his children, who is not only most tenderly affected towards them, but takes particular care of them, provides all things necessary for them, corrects them when they do amiss, encourages them when they do well, and settles a sufficient maintenance upon them, that they may live comfortably in the world, according to every one's estate and quality. Such is the love of the great God to those, who, by the grace of Christ, are made his children. He keeps them always under his own care and conduct; he gives them all things necessary, both for life and godliness; he "chasteneth them, not for his own pleasure, but for their

profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness ;' he plentifully rewards all the services they render him in this world ; and in the next, he settles a kingdom upon every one of them, the kingdom of heaven itself, where they ever live as happily as it is possible for creatures to live : and all because he loves them as his own children by adoption, and the grace of his only-begotten Son.

This, therefore, is here meant by the love of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our God and our Father. It is the love of God, as he is the Maker, Preserver, and Governor of the whole world, who orders and disposeth of all things in it, according to his own will and pleasure ; and therefore, as for his own glory, so likewise for the good of those he loves and is well-pleased with. " For we know," saith the apostle, " that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28. All who love God, God loves ; and seeing he loves them, he makes all things concur to their advantage. For which purpose, by his good providence, he makes them of such a temper, as will best suit with the circumstances he designs for them ; or else orders their circumstances so as will best suit with the temper he made them of. He measures out such a proportion of the good things of this life to them, as he knows will be good for them, and no more. He allots them such a place to live in upon earth, where they may enjoy the means whereby to obtain grace and salvation by his Son. He keeps them from falling into any evil, and all evil from falling upon them. He defends them from all their enemies, or else turns their hearts, and makes them to become their friends. He infatuates

the counsels, and defeats all the ill designs that men or devils can form against them. He hears the prayers they put up unto him in his Son's name, and for his sake accepts of all the duties they perform to him. He is with them wherever they are, to direct, assist, and prosper them in whatever they do. He sanctifieth and blesseth all manner of occurrences to them, so that everything which happens, is, all things considered, the best that could happen to them. There are many, I may truly say innumerable, such instances of the love which God the Father is pleased, for his Son's sake, to manifest to those who are regenerate, and so made his children in him, even by his ordinary providence. And where that fails, he is pleased to do it in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, as we see in the children of Israel; for he having a special love for them, by reason of their near relation to his Son incarnate, he brought them into and out of Egypt; he led them, he fed them, he clothed them miraculously for forty years together; and all because he loved them, as it is said, Deut. iv. 37; vii. 7, 8. And particularly when Balaam was hired to curse them, "God turned his curse into a blessing, because he loved them," Deut. xxiii. 5.

Thus he, one way or other, always preserves those he loves from all things that may hurt them, and withholds nothing from them that will really do them good; but he carries them through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, so as to bring them at last to heaven, where they clearly see his love in everything that ever befell them, continually praise and adore him for it, and are eternally happy in the perfect enjoyment of it. From all which it appears, how great a blessing it is to

have the love of God the Father, the Almighty Creator and Governor of all things; how necessarily it follows upon the grace of his only-begotten Son; and, by consequence, with how great reason, as well as charity to the Corinthians, the apostle here, next to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, prays they might have the love of God.

And that their happiness might be complete, he adds also, "the communion of the Holy Ghost," the third Person in the most blessed Trinity: called the Spirit, both of the Father and the Son, because he proceeds from both; and holy in a peculiar manner, because all the holiness that is in the creatures proceeds from him. And to have communion or fellowship with him, is to partake of his holiness, and of all the glorious effects of the grace of Christ, and the love of God in him: for as he proceedeth both from the Father and the Son, both the Father and the Son act by him; and therefore he is called "the finger of God," Luke xi. 20. The Father acteth by him in the government of the world, and all the parts of it; the Son, in the government of the church, and all particular members in it; and whatever blessings we receive from the Father, through the merits and mediation of the Son, they are all conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit, who, for that purpose, abides with us for ever, John xiv. 16. It is he, as proceeding from, and sent by our Saviour to do it, who enlightens our minds, and teacheth us all things necessary to our everlasting peace, Eph. i. 17; Isa. xi. 2; John xiv. 26. It is he who keepeth us from error, heresy, and schism, and guides us into all truth, both in faith and manners, John xvi. 13. It is he who sanctifies, renews, and regenerates us, and so makes us new creatures, and the

children of the most high God, 2 Thess. ii. 13; John iii. 5, 6, 8; Tit. iii. 5. It is he who beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16. It is he who mortifies the deeds of the body, that quickens our souls, and “worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure,” Rom. viii. 13; John vi. 63; Phil. ii. 13. It is he who endues men with spiritual gifts, suitable to the work which God requires of them: to one he gives the “word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gift of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues,” 1 Cor. xii. 8—10. It is he who produceth in us “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;” which are, therefore, said to be the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23. And so all manner of goodness and virtue, wherever it is found among men, it all springs from the good Spirit of God, as from its root, and from thence also receives all its nourishment, increase, and strength, Eph. iii. 16. It is he, also, who is our only Comforter, who supports and cheers our spirits, by manifesting God’s love and favour to us, lifting up the light of his countenance upon us, keeping our hearts fixed upon our promised inheritance, filling us with firm hopes and constant expectations of it, and so giving us peace, and joy, and satisfaction of mind, in whatever happens here below, John xvi. 7; Acts ix. 31; Rom. xiv. 17. In short, whatever direction, assistance, or power we have or can have, of thinking, or desiring, or speaking, or doing anything that is truly good, it is

communicated to us by the Spirit of God our Saviour; and, therefore, is all comprehended under this one great blessing, which the apostle here wisheth for in the last place, even the communion of the Holy Ghost.

The several parts of the text being thus explained, we may easily observe the meaning of the whole to be this: that the apostle here prays that the Corinthians might have, first, the grace of God the Son; that is, all the mercy which he, as the Redeemer of mankind, had purchased for them with his blood. Secondly, that they might have the love of God the Father; that is, all the favours which he, as the supreme Governor of the world, could show them. And thirdly, that they might have the communion of the Holy Ghost; that is, all the gifts, graces, and comforts which he could communicate unto them, both from the Father and the Son. Or, in short, that they might have all things, that God the Son, or God the Father, or God the Holy Ghost, could do for them, according to their several ways of working in the world; that is, all things that could any way contribute to make them completely happy. All which David also, or the church by him, prays for in the same method and order, saying "God" (אלהים) "be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us," Psal. lxxvii. 1.

Now, from hence we may learn, how necessary it is to believe in the most blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, one God; seeing they all are pleased to concern themselves so much about us, and our happiness depends upon them all. Hence we may learn to confide and trust on all and every one of these Divine Persons, for all things relating to our happiness and salvation.

Hence we may learn what infinite cause we have to praise and adore God for his infinite goodness to us poor mortals upon earth, and to sing with the choir of heaven, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory," Isa. vi. 3.

THE END.

X Beveridge, William, bp. of St. A
133 Select sermons. London, Religi
4 iety, [1848]
viii, 404p. 16cm. (The writ
doctrinal Puritans and divines o
century, v. 16)

1. Church of England--Sermons.

333221

